CASTLE of

No. 28

FRANKENSTEIN

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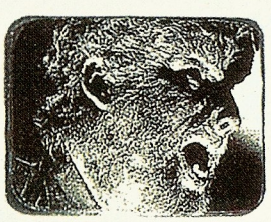
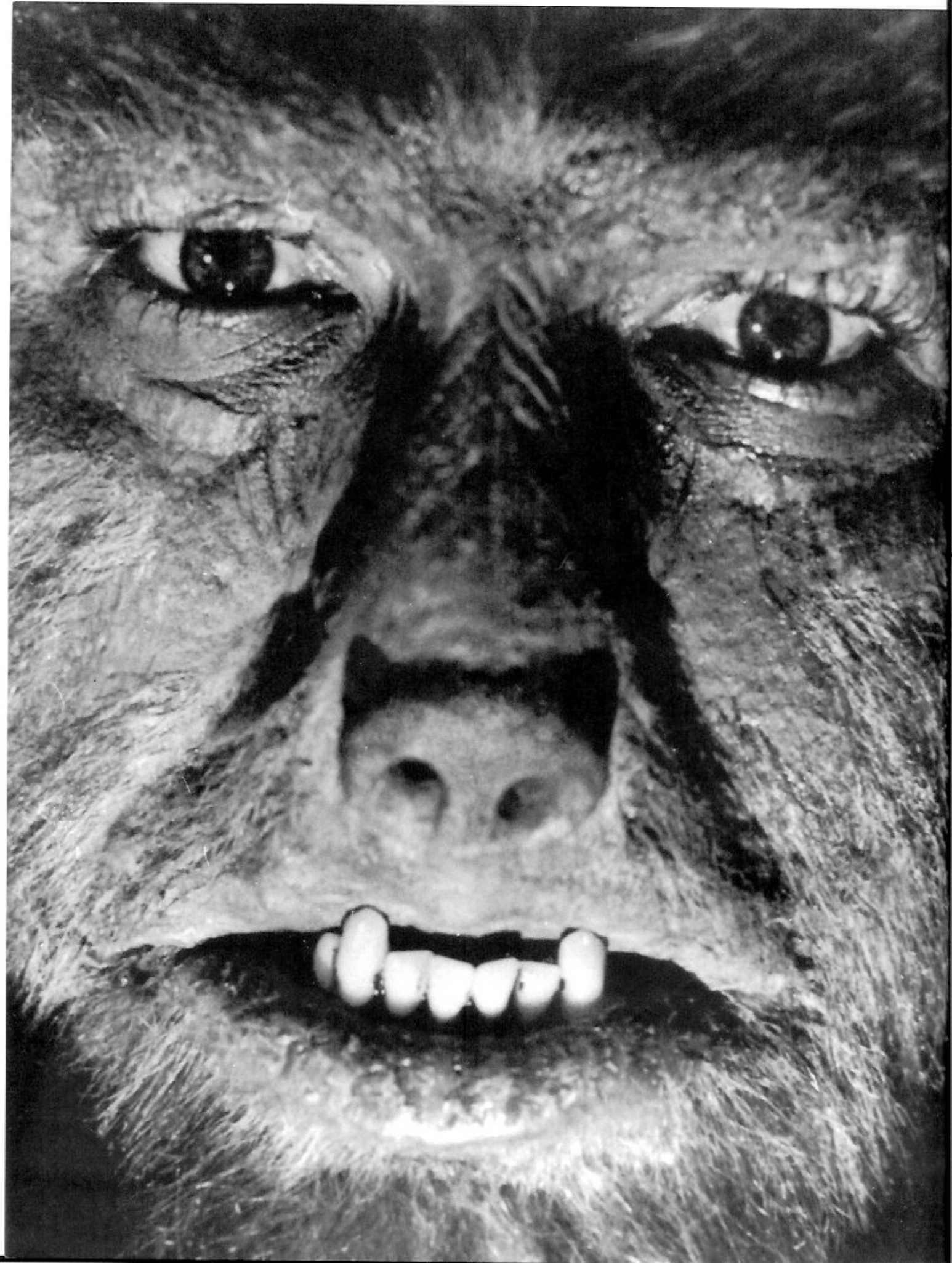


WEREWOLF Issue



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Dennis J. Druktenis
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Larry Ivie
Consulting Editor

FRONT COVER: ***All-New*** **WEREWOLF COVER** (©2000 by Larry Ivie)
INSIDE FRONT & BACK COVER: Lon Chaney, Jr. is the one and only WOLF MAN!
INSIDE BACK COVER: Oliver Reed in THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF.

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CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN #28 is published by *Dennis Druktenis Publishing & Mail Order, Inc.* 348 Jocelyn Pl. Highwood, IL 60040. This new updated revival of the legendary monster magazine is not affiliated with the original publisher but is a tribute to that pioneering effort. The current publisher cannot be held responsible for non-payment or non-receipt of goods purchased from Gothic Publishing. CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN #28 is **TM** and ©2000 by *Dennis Druktenis Publishing & Mail Order, Inc.* All Rights Reserved. The photos used in this classic monster magazine are used for a nostalgic historical look at the movies and are believed to be in the public domain. Those photos not in the public domain are **TM** and ©2000 by their respective owners. Your LETTERS OF FRANKENSTEIN or memories are always wanted. All letters/memories become the property of the magazine and may be published in whole or part and will be considered intended for publication.
Printed in the U.S.A. SUMMER 2000 ISSUE

FRANKENSTEIN FOCUS

What is "FRANKENSTEIN FOCUS"? Our "FOCUS" is on Frankenstein the Monster, classic horror and sci-fi movies and of course the re-creation of an all-new, yet still old CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN by starting where it all began in 1961.

Way back in issue #1 in 1961, the Frankenstein Society was started and continued to be advertised in most of the first 10 issues. In keeping with this "FOCUS" we have re-started the Frankenstein Society using the original as a basis (see the ad on page 66). We hope to continue to redefine and add more fun with each issue. THE MUMMY'S CURSE! mail order item was offered in CoF #3, 4 and 5. If anyone has these items we would love to acquire some nice copies of them in order to reproduce and once again offer them for sale in these pages again. We want CoF to be the best classic (and fun) monster magazine there is.

We cannot renovate the CASTLE without your help, be it LETTERS of FRANKENSTEIN, Frankenstein Memories, articles etc. Help us build this new magazine. This is your CASTLE and we welcome you.

- Dennis J. Druktenis

Special Thanks to Nicholas J. Certo, Larry Ivie, all our writers and artists this issue and to you for purchasing this issue.

FRANKENSTEIN FLASHBACKS

COLLECTOR'S EDITION NUMBER ONE JAN. 1962

The first issue of CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN went to the printer around August 30, 1961 and was shipped on October 31, 1961 (see the printing invoice below). It carried a January 1962 date on the contents page but the January date was blocked out on the front cover and it carried a February date to perhaps give it a little more time on the newsstands. The cover price was 35¢!

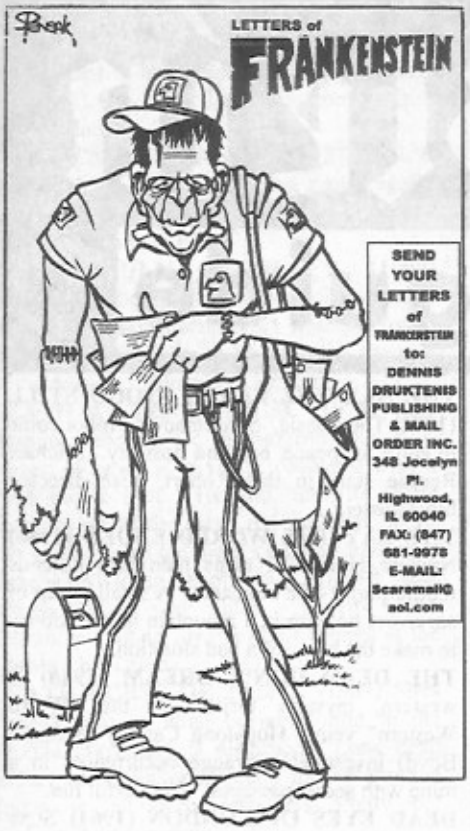
150,000 copies were printed of this first "COLLECTOR'S EDITION" and a final sales figure from Kable News Company reported sales as being 72, 135. It cost $8898.78 to print.

SPAULDING-MOSS COMPANY

The cover that appeared on our first new issue #26 was the cover that was originally supposed to appear on this first issue. Larry Ivie in SCARY MONSTERS #20 talked about happened to change the cover to the one you see above. "Its GREATEST advantage, I thought, was a cover totally different from FAMOUS MONSTERS- -a SCENE rather than just a big head. I can't recall what time the phone rang- -it was LATE! 'I've been giving it a lot of thought,' said Calvin, 'and realize we just CAN'T take a chance on a cover so...DIFFERENT! I've got to use a portrait! I'll come to you place as soon as I can. See what you can do while I'm on the way!' Half asleep, I reached for the nearest photo of Karloff from 'Bride...' (with more time, I would have found a better one, from the first film), and half-heartedly, began a variation of it with colored CHALK. There was no way an oil painting, or even a water color could dry in time for Calvin to carry it away, and I knew that as soon as he saw the two versions side-by-side he would come to his senses and use the FIRST one. I was completing the hair with black ink when Calvin arrived at the door. He seemed impressed at how far I had gotten so fast, and pointed to a spot where I should sign it, which I did very slowly, with white ink, and then decided I would have to wipe it of and do it again, later, because it was too large. The face needed at LEAST another hour of work to be adequate to use, in some way, in some later issue. But, before I could do anything else, Calvin grabbed it up, said 'Perfect!' and dashed out into the night!"

HASSLE CASTLE By DR LADY ©2000 by David Lady

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, WOLFER?
AW, I HURT MY ARM PLAYING PIGGYBACK RIDE WITH MY 6-YEAR -OLD NEPHEW.
REALLY?
YEAH....I FELL OFF.
DAVID LADY


LETTERS of
FRANKENSTEIN
SEND YOUR LETTERS of FRANKENSTEIN to: DENNIS DRUKTENIS PUBLISHING & MAIL ORDER INC. 348 Jocelyn Pl. Highwood, IL 60040 FAX: (847) 681-9978 E-MAIL: Scaremail@aol.com

Hello, Dennis!

The CoF and JoF revivals are awesome... great work!

Gary Radovich Valley Stream, NY

Dear Dennis

A great job on reviving CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN from its 25-year-old grave. I was also impressed by you extremely speedy mail service. (Now, that's definitely not in the Calvin Beck tradition.)

As for that legendary Ackerman/Beck meeting in the early 70s, it was actually mentioned briefly in CoF #18. (See page 43, middle column.)

Marc Russell Los Angeles, CA

Dennis-

Thanks for CoF 27, I especially liked the articles on the early Dracula films, but the entire issue was excellent. Don't know how you can put out more mags and still keep the quality level so high, but it sure is good to see the Cal Beck/CoF legacy revived in such a grand manner.

I'm also glad to see that you're going to publish Beck's SENSE OF WONDER soon. Having only recently read his HEROES OF HORROR volume (which I think ranks with Everson's CLASSICS OF THE HORROR FILM and Bojarski's THE FILMS OF BORIS KARLOFF).

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"Not of This Earth"
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"Creature from the Black Lagoon"
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BEN CHAPMAN THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON	DOLORES FULLER BRIDE OF THE MONSTER GLEN OR GLENDA ELVIS SONGWRITER
BOB BURNS INVASION OF SAUCER MEN IT CONQUERED THE WORLD THE SHE CREATURE KOGAR!	CONRAD BROOKS PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE BRIDE OF THE MONSTER
TOM SAVINI SPECIAL EFFECTS WIZARD	RICHARD VALLEY SCARLET STREET EDITOR
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I'm looking forward to it.

Thanks, and as the Cool Ghoul (WXIX-Cincinnati) said, "Time to get back in the box!"

John Hitz Lexington, KY

Dear Dennis,

Your magazines have really taken me back to when I was a kid and I would redesign my GI Joe collection into my heroes. Which were, you guessed it!...Frankenstein's Monster, The Wolf Man, Dracula and all the others. An as an adult I've acquired much respect for the actors behind the make up (my favorite being Glen Strange). The articles in Journal of Frankenstein #2 and 3 are just the finest I've ever read about Mr. Strange. Thank you Mr. Kurta and thank you Dennis for the memories!

I also just got CoF #27 and I'm very impressed! You're giving monster fans what they want in a monster magazine. Keep up the good works.

Kenny Long Marietta, GA

Dear Dennis,

Hi, thanks, just got the new Castle of Frankenstein, looks great, the Ivie cover sends you back!! Great Stuff! And as I always say, monsters for everybody!!

John Castiglia Harrisburg, PA

YOUR LETTERS of FRANKENSTEIN are wanted. SEND THEM IN TODAY!

Frankenstein Video movieguide

by Ron Adams

By no means is this a complete listing, as the video market has exploded over the past two decades. It's simply an attempt to list as many movies on video that fall into the general category of Classic Horror and Science Fiction. So much goes in and out of print, it's mind joggling, just trying to keep up. Hopefully it will tweak those Monster Boomer memories of growing up watching these fun movies in the theatre, on TV or on video. We'll try to update and refine as we stomp through the 21st century in CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN!

DANCE OF DEATH (1968) Also known as: HOUSE OF EVIL and MACABRE SERENADE. Stars Boris Karloff. Matthias Morteval (Karloff) calls for a family reunion and the reading of his will. The family bears a curse as they discover upon meeting at an old mansion. One of the final Karloff films, made in Mexico and Los Angles.

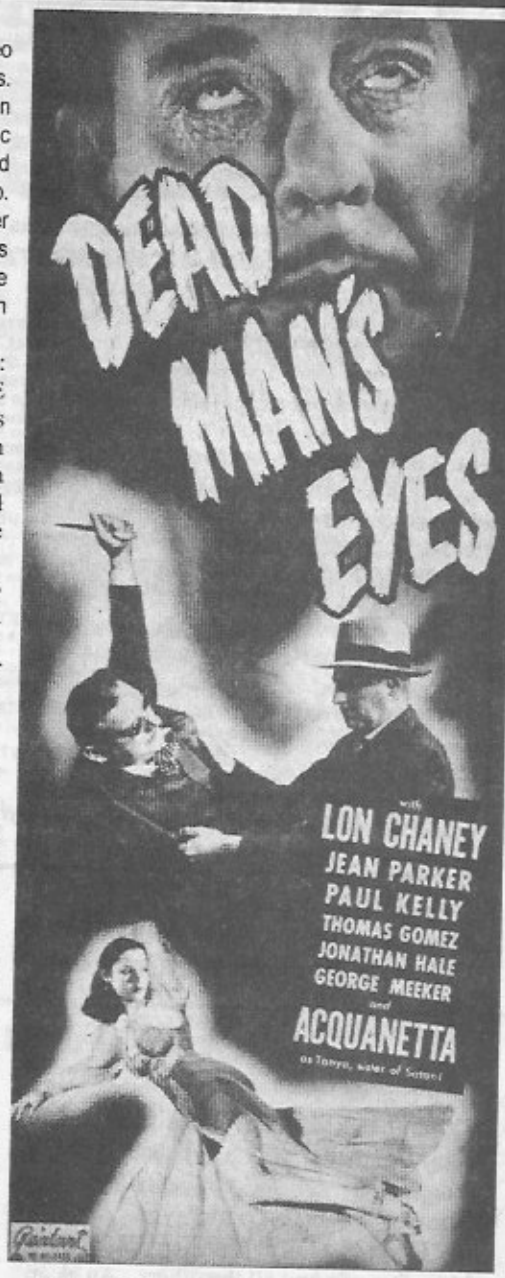
DARK EYES OF LONDON (1939) Also known as THE HUMAN MONSTER, this is a dark Lugosi classic. He is truly evil in a dual role as an insurance salesman and proprietor of a school for the blind. Really turned Brits on their ear with its horrors.

DARK STAR (1971) Cult Classic. The early days of director John Carpenter. An astronaut on board a ship that seeks out unstable planets. They blow them to bits when they find them. Along the way a blob-like beach ball terrorizes the crew. Wild, wacky and cool.

DAUGHTER OF HORROR (1953) Strange, eerie art film about a woman's decent into homicidal mania. Film noir elements and downright creepy scenes, to scenes that make you scratch your head. Filmed as a nightmare with very little dialogue.

THE DAY IT CAME TO EARTH (1977) Drive-in flick from Little Rock, Arkansas. Zombie from outer space raids an Arkansas campus. Crazy sci-fi in the old 1950's tradition.

THE DAY THE EARTH FROZE (1959) Fantasy epic with an evil witch by the name of Loki (nope , not the Loki that's Thor's evil brother in comics...though she looks like him!) A young woman is captured and held in the cave of the witch. The caverns look like Hades with slaves working over fire. Loki, through the use of black magic, begins freezing the earth. A Russian film, dubbed in English, that has a very bizarre look with alien landscape matte paintings and otherworldly special effects. Extremely interesting to look at, but a little of the story seems lost in the translation...well, a lot of story. Cool to look at with flying back capes and magical harps that create the Northern Lights.



THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951) The classic. Spaceman and robot come to earth for peace, but find hostility. Michael Rennie stars in this Robert Wise directed blockbuster.

THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED (1956) Nuclear Holocaust turns men into hideous reptile-parrot-like monsters. A small group of survivors hole up in a mountain house and try to make the best...of a bad situation.

THE DEAD DON'T DREAM (1948) A western, mystery thriller in the "Weird Western" vein. Hopalong Cassidy (William Boyd) investigates strange occurrences in a mine with secret passages. Wonderful fun.

DEAD EYES OF LONDON (1961) Stars Joachim Fuchberger, Karen Baal, Klaus Kinski and Andy Berger. Insurance fraud by way of brutal murders. The hulking brute man in this is reminiscent of Tor Johnson on one of his good days. Powerful and mean. A really great Edgar Wallace chiller! German, dubbed in English.

DEAD MAN'S EYES/PILLOW OF DEATH - Dbl. Feature (1944/1945) Lon Chaney Jr.'s a painter in DEAD MAN'S EYES with assistant Acquanetta. When he burns his eyes with acid, a murder occurs - who is responsible? PILLOW OF DEATH has the persecuted Chaney searching for the killer and finding himself sleepwalking in a graveyard and discovering an exhumed body in the basement. Both films on one tape from MCA/Universal.

DEAD MEN WALK (1943) George Zucco in one of his best roles as twin brothers, one good...one a blood-sucking Satan worshipping vampire! A low budget production that is really very good. Dwight Fyre returns as a Renfield-like keeper 'o' the coffin!

DEAD OF NIGHT (1945) If I had to actually list my favorite horror/supernatural flicks...this would be in the top 5. It features five stories in a wrap-around form all tied together. Scary children's games, ghosts, talking wooden dummies, a haunted mirror (yikes!)...all make for one entertaining good time.

DEAD OF NIGHT (1977) Dan Curtis produced this three story feature. It's the companion film to TRILOGY OF TERROR (which also had three short stories). This one features some very cool tales from the typewriter of Richard (Twilight Zone)

Matheson. The stories are "No Such Thing as a Vampire," "Second Chance," and "Bobby." A great cast of actors including Elisha Cook, Jr., Ed Begley, Jr., Lee Montgomery and Patrick Macnee.

THE DEADLY MANTIS (1957) You'll never look the same at a praying mantis again! This thing destroys buildings and eats people. Call the Orkin man FAST!

THE DEADLY NECKLACE (1962) Christopher Lee as Sherlock Holmes pitted against Professor Moriarity. A stolen Egyptian necklace that appears to be cursed is the root of the mystery. Filmed in Germany.

DEATH AT LOVE HOUSE (1975) Very strange made-for-TV movie from the 70's. Robert Wagner is a writer obsessed with a dead movie idol. He and his wife (Kate Jackson) go to the star's old mansion, so he can write. Turns out there's a ghost/other time dimension thing happening...doesn't that always drive you nuts! Creepy John Carradine's along for the ride. Filmed at the Harold Lloyd estate.

DEATH CURSE OF TARTU (1967) Stars Fred Pinero. Indian burial ground in the Florida everglades is disturbed. Long dead Indian witch doctor is pretty miffed about it and starts stalking the despoilers. Pretty cool looking Indian mummy.

THE DEATH KISS (1932) Filmed shortly after DRACULA, this mystery who-done-it features Bela Lugosi, Edward Van Sloan and David Manners (all reunited from DRACULA's cast). It gives us a peek behind the scenes of a movie backlot in the 1930's.

DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY (1934) The figure of death hangs over a group of friends and relatives. He materializes before the head of the family and announces that he plans a holiday. Death decides to take human form and walk among this circle of friends for a limited time. When he does, all death stops in the world and causes more problems than you might think. The dark angel also finds a love interest. A poetic and moving film with eerie subtle special effects and great performance by Frederick March as Death.

DELUGE (1933) One of the great "lost" fantasies. For years this film was thought totally lost. Rediscovered, it is a great RKO sci-fantasy in which New York City is leveled by a tidal wave. Stunning effects. Stars Peggy Shannon, Lois Wilson, Sidney Blackmer and Edward Van Sloan (FRANKENSTEIN, DRACULA). Digitally mastered. This is the only known print, in Italian with English subtitles.

DEMENTIA 13 (1963) Patrick McGee in a truly first-class low-budget chiller. Suspenseful and shocking with some eerie underwater shots from a small pond and what lies at the bottom. Creepy and unsettling.

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET (1936) Todd Slaughter in his most famous role. He's a murderer masquerading as a barber. Bent on revenge and the need for cash, he kills customers while the neighbor baker turns the bodies into meat pies. Unbelievable high horror camp; Slaughter is "deliciously" diabolical.

DESTINATION MOON (1950) It's the race to the moon! But once we get there...can we ever get back?! Beautiful George Pal effects.

DESTINATION NIGHTMARE (1958) Four episodes from the TV show THE VEIL that was an unsold series. Macabre stories in the vein of the THRILLER TV show, but on a lower budget. Great guest stars too. Very weird that these were produced for TV and never aired.

DETOUR (1945) Director Edgar Ulmer (THE BLACK CAT, MAN FROM PLANET X) lends his expressionistic dark touch and makes this film a classic. A man involved with a femme-fatale is detoured into a netherworld of crime and death.

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER (1941) Stars Edward Arnold, Walter Huston, Simone Simon and Jane Darwell. Stunning and horrifying tale of making a deal with the devil. Needless to say, it isn't a very good idea. There's rot behind the gold. Walter Houston steals the show as ol' Satan himself. Funny and blood-curdling. Simone Simon is wonderful as a dark angel of the devil. Simply a great movie.

THE DEVIL BAT (1942) Also known as KILLER BATS, this flick features Lugosi hell-bent on revenge from people making profits on his inventions. He uses giant killer bats and a special after shave that attracts them. He gives the after shave to his enemies and... "Goodbyeeeee."

THE DEVIL COMMANDS (1941) Boris Karloff stars in one of his most outrageous mad doctor movies. A real powerhouse with Karloff trying to bring back his wife's soul through a medium and the lingering souls from corpses that are strapped around a lab in astronaut like suits. The electrical equipment creates a tornado of other-worldly darkness...not as silly as it may sound. One of Karloff's scariest mad doctor movies.

DEVIL BAT'S DAUGHTER (1946) The sequel that changes the original concept from THE DEVIL BAT dramatically. The daughter falls into drug-induced trances and people start ending up dead. A cool nightmare montage of photography is very psychotronic.

DEVIL DOLL (1936) Lionel Barrymore is an

Blood Red Lips... hungry for love...
BUT CURSED BY THE BRAND OF THE VAMPIRES!
DEVIL BAT'S DAUGHTER
ROSEMARY LA PLANCHE · JOHN JAMES
PRC

escaped convict befriended by a mad scientist and his even nuttier wife. Barrymore wishes to prove his innocence and the scientist has developed something that may help. He can shrink humans (and animals) to become miniature zombies. Directed by Tod Browning.

DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS (1954) Woman and her side kick (a nasty robot) drop out of the sky to collect earth males. Wild fifties sci-fi! Stars Hazel Court.

THE DEVIL RIDES OUT (1968) AKA: THE DEVIL'S BRIDE. Extremely well-done adventure into the macabre. Christopher Lee as a "Van Helsing-type" chaser of evil is excellent. A group of Satan worshippers are out to do some heavy recruiting. An incredible Satan-induced hallucination sequence with a demon on horseback and a giant tarantula is truly frightening. Includes theatrical trailer/ preview.

THE DEVIL'S COMMANDMENT (1956) AKA: I, VAMPIRI. Mario Bava as photographer makes for some atmospheric scenes in this Italian strange flick of mayhem and blood-letting.

THE DEVIL'S HAND (1942) A French film that is stunning! Right off the bat, a strange man bursts into a local pub, holding a mysterious package. He tells his story of a pact with the Devil and the terrible, strange circumstances that followed. In fact, he is now pursued by Satan himself. An incredible fantasy with excellent acting and photography. Bizarre image sequence is a real shocker.

THE DEVIL'S HAND (1962) Robert Alda begins having unbelievable nightmares from some strange netherworld. A witch/voodoo princess has planted the dreams in his brain and pursues Alda to join her black magic ways. Voodoo dolls and hallucinations; enough to give you the heebie jeebies!

THE DEVIL'S MESSENGER (1962) Lon Chaney Jr. as the Devil telling tales of terror and the supernatural. The best stories include a photographer, a woman's corpse encased in ice that possesses a man and a gypsy fortune teller who really sees the future!

THE DEVIL'S RAIN (1975) A digitally re-mastered version. Ernest Borgnine stars as the leader of a demon cult. Also stars: Ida Lupino, John Travolta, William Shatner, Keehan Winn and Eddie Albert! I think it looks like rain...

THE DIABOLIQUE DR. Z (1966) A twisted European Jess Franco flick. A young doctor uses her evil ways to revenge the death of her father. Torture, nasty mechanical devices and an alluring spider woman dance.

DIABOLIQUE (1955) French suspense film of terror. Woman plots her husband's murder. After killing him...it appears that he has come back from the grave for revenge.

DIARY OF A MADMAN (1962) Vincent Price as a sculptor driven to the edge by a fantastic demonic being called the Horla. He kills his victims and sculpts over them.

DICK TRACY MEETS GRUESOME (1947) Has Dick Tracy met his match? Weird gas bombs and mad criminal Karloff as Gruesome. Ralph Byrd is Tracy and a great cast that includes Anne Gwynne, Skelton Knaggs and Robert Clarke. Loads of Saturday matinee fun!

DOCTOR BLOOD'S COFFIN (1960) A Hammer-looking film with a doctor experimenting with everlasting life. A really cool looking zombie is unhappy with the proceedings and rises from the grave.

DR. CYCLOPS (1940) Filmed in color, this is the story of a doctor with too many screws loose. Working with atomic power on a remote island he shrinks animals and eventually - people. Exciting fantasy from some of the KING KONG production team.

DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE (1920) John Barrymore stars in this Stevenson classic. His transformations are terrific. Favorite weird scene: Hyde in a dream attacks Jekyll in bed in the guise of a translucent giant tarantula! Includes music score, PLUS this tape includes a 1910 version of the classic tale after the Barrymore version, and excerpts from another 1920 version that starred Sheldon Lewis.

DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE (1932) It seems that most people do feel this is the definitive Jekyll/Hyde movie. There are so many version...but the make-up, the acting and the quality of production in this 1932 hit from the MGM scream factory really does the trick! The mild-mannered and easy going Dr. Jekyll theorizes that we all have a true "evil" self within. Through chemicals he finds he can prove that theory by bringing true evil out - in himself. He succeeds all too well. His diabolical alter ego, Mr. Hyde begins to take control, suppressing Jekyll and tormenting a beautiful young woman. A great movie.

DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE (1941) The classic story with Spencer Tracy as the tormented Doctor Jekyll/Mr. Hyde. Also stars Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner. A bizarre nightmare-dream sequence.

DR. ORLOFF'S MONSTER (1964) Stars Hugo Blanco, Agnes Spaak and Perla Cristal. Dr. Orloff is back in this sequel to THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF. A young woman finds that her father as been made into an electronic zombie and does the bidding of the evil doctor. Made primarily in Spain, dubbed in English. Creepy and strange.

DR. RENAULT'S SECRET (1943) George Zucco, one of our maddest doctors, turns an ape into an ape-man (J. Carroll Naish). Filmed with film noir style and quick pacing. Pass out the bananas and turn down the lights!

DR. TERROR'S GALLERY OF HORRORS (1967) AKA: RETURN FROM THE PAST, GALLERY OF HORRORS. ahhhh, muh head hurts. Lon Chaney and John Carradine somehow got wrangled into this collection of horror stories. Very, very low budget production. Carradine is the host/narrator...Chaney is in an episode as a doctor. A man is brought back from the dead in one story...other tales include a vampire and a time warp. Better load an extra dose of butter on the popcorn, you'll need it.

DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS (1965) Cushing is a fortune teller, weaving together an anthology of great stories. Lee co-stars with a disembodied hand. Great full-steam-ahead 60's horror in heaping doses.

DR. X (1932) Early color film using 2-strip process. Lionel Atwill and Fay Wray in an action-packed who-done-it! Terrible murders in a house full of nutty research doctors. Some hideous monster made of "synthetic flesh" is on a rampage at night when the moon is out. Very cool classic horror!

DONOVAN'S BRAIN (1954) Lew Ayers mind is taken control by a power mad dead man. Really great 1950's version of Curt Siodmak's novel. Nancy Davis-Reagan is the slightly concerned female lead.

DOOMED TO DIE (1940) Boris Karloff as detective - Mr. Wong. This film is also known under the title: THE MYSTERY OF WENTWORTH CASTLE. A great entry in the series.

DRACULA (1931) A sheer classic. Critics gripe about the staginess and slow moving story...but without those elements it would lose an unworldly ambiance that I love. It may be slow in development at the beginning, but it's not boring. The actors are believable and the whole film can put you in a trance of uneasiness. Fyre as Renfield is electric, Chandler is beautiful and frail as the Count's victim, Manners is frustrated and righteous, Sloan as Van Helsing is the quintessential hope that we look to...and Bela Lugosi became an icon stamped in the minds of movie-goers forever with this film.

DRACULA (1973) Jack Palace stars in a intense study on the Prince of Darkness. This version directed by Dan (THE NIGHT STALKER) Curtis.

DRACULA A.D. 1972 (1972) Chris Lee's Count moves ahead from a gothic setting to contemporary England. The vampiric carnage begins again, but never fear! - Peter Cushing is not far away...

DRACULA AND THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES (1973) AKA: LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES. Fangs and flying fists in this vampire/martial arts movie. Drive-in heaven with Peter Cushing too.

DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE (1968) We all remember the great poster and newspaper ad from this. Chris Lee (Dracula) Fangs and gapping mouth as someone is trying to stake 'im! Chris Lee is back and ticked off at the whole village!

DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS (1965) Christopher Lee as the vicious blood-sucker in this long sought after Hammer flick. This version is in widescreen and digitally remastered. The Count gets visitors at the castle and he serves them well (in every sense of the phrase).

DRACULA'S DAUGHTER (1936) Van Helsing is arrested after staking Dracula. But Dracula's daughter is still on the loose on the foggy streets of London. Well-acted and atmospherically filmed at Universal.

DRESSED TO KILL (1946) Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. Murders somehow revolve around small music boxes and Rathbone is great.

DRUMS OF JEOPARDY (1933) AKA: THE MARK OF TERROR. Warner Oland plays Boris Karlov!!! Surely a ploy on the public to create confusion with the popular Karloff name. A tale of murderous revenge by evil doctor Oland. An interesting oddity.

EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS (1958) Outstanding effects by master Ray Harryhausen in this sci-fi classic. See the saucers destroying Washington D.C. and buzzing cars on the highway. Great stuff!

ED WOOD (1995) Okay, it's a lot of fiction and Lugosi might not have been as abrasive as he's depicted here. But as a Hollywood fairy tale, this is sheer brilliance. Filmed in black and white, director Tim Burton captures the enthusiasm and love of B-picture to a "T." Martin Landau is brilliant as Bela Lugosi.

ED WOOD: A LOOK BACK AT ANGORA (1994) Ed Wood documentary. The story, through clips and history, of a grade-Z film maker with unstoppable enthusiasm. Interviews and cool footage.

THE ED WOOD STORY: THE PLAN 9 COMPANION Story and clips of Ed Wood and his films. Narrated by Lee Harris.

EEGAH! (1959) A caveman has survived evolution and aging for thousands of years on the California desert all alone. Ah, right. Plus swinging tunes from Arch Hall, Jr. Put the pizza in the oven and get some friends together - go ahead, you can take it.

THE ELECTRONIC MONSTER (1960) Electronic brain control that turns people's lives into living nightmares. Psychotronic, man!

ENCOUNTER WITH THE UNKNOWN (1971) A cross between The Twilight Zone, Night Gallery and Ripley's Believe It or Not! Rod Serling hosts "true life" ghost/horror stories.

EVIL MIND (1935) AKA: THE CLAIRVOYANT. Claude Rains and Fay Wray in a little known supernatural film. Rains is a phony mind reader who suddenly begins to have real visions and revelations to his dismay and torment.

THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN (1964) The mix of Hammer and Universal. The creature is back - looking like the old Universal Frankenstein Monster, with all the burnings and beating intact. Peter Cushing is Dr. Frankenstein, as unstoppable as the monster itself.

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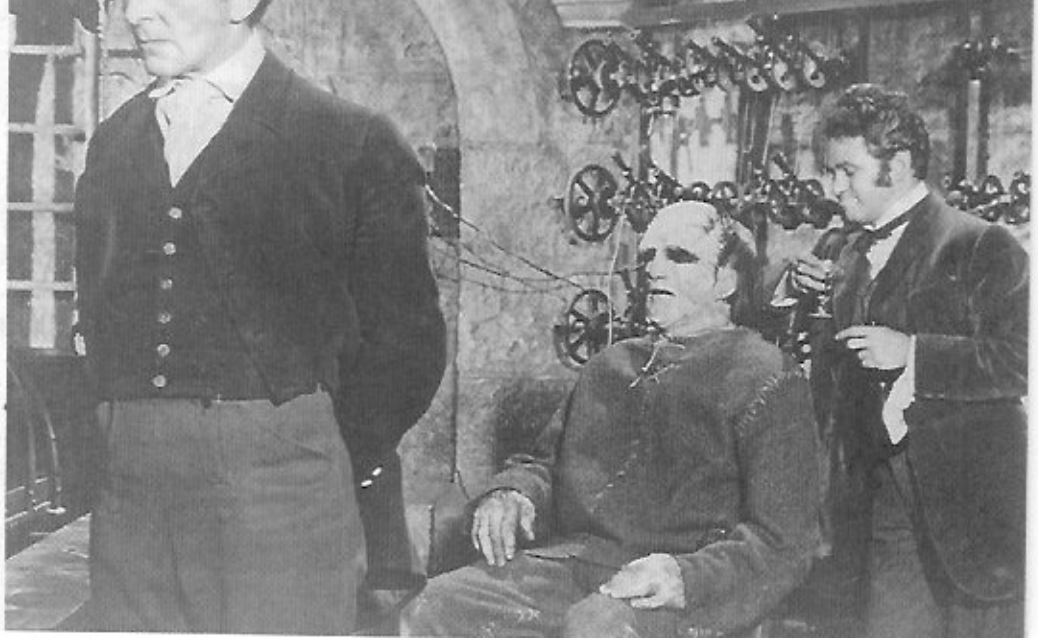

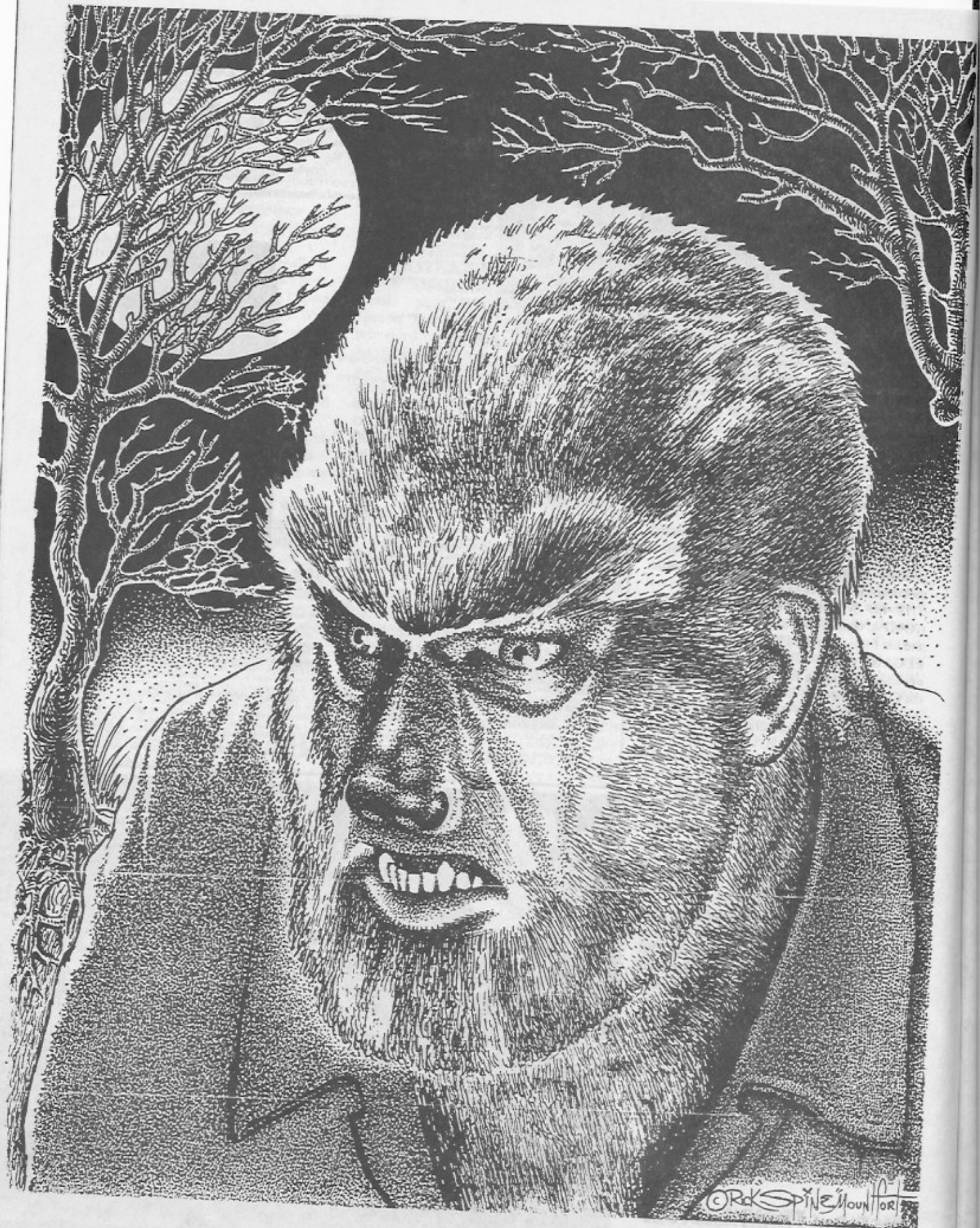
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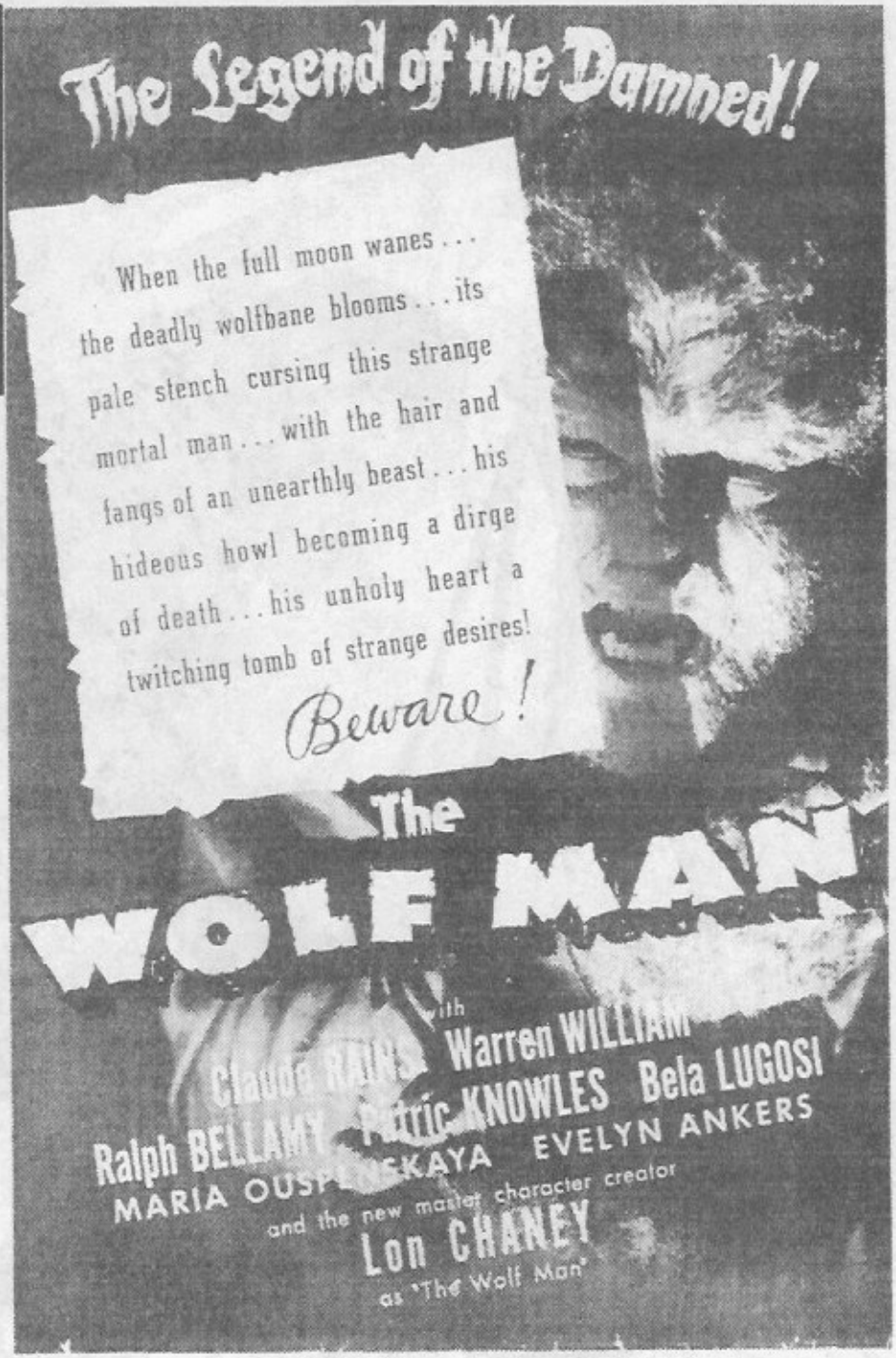
THE WOLF MAN (1941)

a review by Tom Triman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and the new master character creator
Lon CHANEY
as "The Wolf Man"

Directed by GEORGE WAGGNER • Associate Producer, GEORGE WAGGNER
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

"LYCANTHROPY (werewolfism): A disease of the mind in which human beings imagine they are wolf-men. According to an old legend which persists in certain localities, the victims actually assume the physical characteristics of the animal. There is a small village near Talbot Castle which still claims to have had gruesome experiences with this supernatural creature."

- prologue to the film, THE WOLF MAN (Universal, 1941)

After having spent 18 years in America, Lawrence Stewart Talbot (Lon Chaney, Jr.) returns to his birthplace, the Welsh village of Llanwelly, to claim his inheritance. Larry's brother, John, has recently been killed in a hunting accident. Arriving at Talbot Castle, Larry is greeted by his father, Sir John Talbot (Claude Rains), who warmly welcomes him home.

Larry congratulates his father for having recently won the Belden Prize for research. While they are chatting, a new lens for Sir John's attic telescope arrives. Larry, a trained optical technician, volunteers to install it.

Left alone in the attic, Larry peers through the new lens and is pleasantly startled by the sight of an attractive young lady, dressing before the mirror in her room, through a window above the Conliffe antique shop across the street.

Eager to make the girl's acquaintance, Larry visits the antique shop. The girl, Gwen Conliffe (Evelyn Ankers), daughter of the shop's owner, Charles Conliffe (J. M. Kerrigan), tries to sell Larry a peculiar walking stick with a silver handle shaped like a wolf's head. Near the wolf's head is a five-pointed star, which Gwen identifies as a pentagram. She explains that werewolves - human beings who turn into wolves - are marked by the pentagram and see it in the palm of their next victim. She also recites an old poem:

"Even a man who is pure in heart
And says his prayers by night
May become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms
And the autumn moon is bright."

Amused by Gwen's mythological sales pitch, Larry buys the cane and asks her to go for a walk with him that evening. As Larry leaves, he and Gwen see a caravan of Gypsies drive into the village. Gwen informs Larry that they are fortune tellers who entertain the villagers with a carnival every autumn.

Later that day, Larry asks his father what he knows about werewolves. Sir John dismisses the legend as "an ancient explanation for the dual personality in each of us". He further informs Larry that the scientific word for the malady is

lycanthrophobia - a variety of schizophrenia - a technical expression for the good and evil in every man's soul. In this case, evil takes the form of an animal. Larry asks his father if he believes in these yarns. Sir John replies that he believes that anything can happen to a man in his own mind.

That night, when Larry shows up for his date, he is disheartened to discover that Gwen has invited a friend of hers, Jenny Williams (Fay Helm), to accompany them to the Gypsy fair.

After stopping to pick wolfbane, the threesome visit the Gypsy camp. While Jenny has her fortune told by a solemn Gypsy named Bela (Bela Lugosi), Larry goes for a walk in the foggy woods with Gwen, who informs her eager escort that she is engaged to the gamekeeper of the Talbot estate, Frank Andrews (Patric Knowles).

In his tent, Bela tosses the batch of wolfbane Jenny picked on the floor, with a strange air of remorse. Jenny notices that the Gypsy's forehead is marked by a five-pointed star, but is too discreet to mention it aloud. Peering into her right palm, Bela is horrified to see the mark of the pentagram in it and, refusing to reveal what he has seen, begs her to go! Frightened by Bela's manner, Jenny runs out of the tent!

Seconds later, Larry and Gwen are startled when the howl of a wolf fills the night air, followed by Jenny's cries, Larry comes upon the awful sight of a wolf knawing on the girl's throat as she lies prone in the foggy marsh!

Larry pulls the ferocious animal off of her. The beast retaliates, inflicting a deep bite in Larry's chest! Larry throws the animal to the ground and furiously beats it to death with his silver-headed walking stick!

Soon after, Gwen appears and tends to the injured Larry. An old Gypsy woman named Maleva (Mario Ouspenskaya), driving by in her wagon, offers to give Larry a ride home.

Larry arrives at Talbot Castle, his coat splattered with blood, accompanied by Gwen and Maleva. In reply to Sir John's

alarmed inquiries, Gwen explains that Larry was bitten by a wolf. While no one is looking, Maleva sneaks away.

When Jenny is found dead in the marsh, Llanwelly's chief constable, Captain Paul Montford (Ralph Bellamy), investigates the incident. Dr. Lloyd (Warren Williams) diagnoses her death as an internal hemorrhage, the result of a severed jugular vein, caused by the bite of a wild animal.

Near Jenny's body, another corpse is found - Bela, the Gypsy fortune teller, fully dressed except for his bare feet. Lloyd observes that the Gypsy's skull has been crushed by blows from a sharp instrument. Larry's silver-headed cane is also found at the tragic scene, but there is no sign of a wolf.

Questioned by Montford the next morning, Larry insists that he killed a wolf, not a man - but Montford has his doubts, and becomes even more skeptical when Larry claims the wound inflicted by the wolf has mysteriously healed overnight!

Sir John theorizes that, when a wolf attacked Jenny in the dark, Larry and Bela came to her rescue - Bela was accidentally killed in the excitement and confusion. Nobody believes Larry's story that he killed a wolf. A rumor that Larry killed the Gypsy fortune teller quickly spreads through the village.

Visiting the crypt where Bela's body has been laid to rest, Larry, hiding behind a pillar, overhears Maleva praying over the coffin:

"The way you walked was thorny,
Through no fault of your own,
But, as the rain enters the soil,
The river enters the sea,
So tears run to their predestined end.
Your suffering is over, Bela, my son.
Now, you will find peace."

Larry realizes that Bela was Maleva's son!

Later, when Mrs. Williams (Doris Lloyd) and a group of village gossips confront Mr. Conliffe in his antique shop, demanding to know what his daughter, Gwen, was doing in the dark with Larry Talbot the night Jenny was killed, Larry arrives and scares them away.

When Conliffe permits Talbot to see Gwen, Larry confronts her about what happened the night of Jenny's death. Not even Gwen believes his story about the wolf! She thinks that he's become confused by what she told him about werewolf legends. "Why does everyone insist that I am confused?", he asks.

Just then, Frank Andrews, the man Gwen is engaged to, arrives. Frank's dog is strangely excited by Talbot's presence, and begins to bark uncontrollably. When Frank refuses to shake Larry's hand, Talbot politely excuses himself and leaves

the shop. Frank tells Gwen, "There's something very tragic about that man. I'm sure nothing but harm will come to you through him."

Following an ancient custom, the Gypsies hold a festive wake for Bela. Attending the festivities, Larry is challenged by Frank to a match at the shooting gallery, while Sir John and Montfort watch. Talbot displays impressive shooting prowess, hitting all the targets, but freezes when the tin image of a wolf suddenly pops up! Larry shoots and misses, but Frank easily shoots the wolf target down.

As Larry passes Maleva's tent, she invites him inside and reveals to him that the wolf he killed was her son, Bela - a werewolf - a creature that can be killed only by a silver bullet, a silver knife or a stick with a silver handle. She warns Larry that "whoever is bitten by a werewolf and lives becomes a werewolf himself!"

Maleva gives Larry a charm to protect him and dares him to show her the wound. Larry opens his shirt, revealing the mark of the pentagram where the wound once was! Maleva glares into his eyes and send him away.

After Larry's departure, Maleva spreads the word among the Gypsies that there is a werewolf in camp. They hastily begin to pack up and leave. As the campsite bustles with activity, Larry meets Gwen and gives Maleva's charm to her for protection, "just in case".

Returning to his room at Talbot Castle, Larry begins to feel strange sensations. An odd, bristling feeling on the skin of his legs prompts him to remove his shoes and socks. He is revolted to see a fresh growth of animal-like hair on his shins and ankles! As he watches in dread, the hair thickens and his feet reshape themselves into the paws of a wolf!

Seized by primitive, malevolent impulses, the thing that was Larry Talbot stalks into the night - a half-human, half-canine hybrid - a hirsute, unearthly creature with claws for fingers and fangs for teeth - a mythological monster unleashed upon the human world - THE WOLF MAN!

Prowling through the foggy woods, the Wolf Man invades the village churchyard, discovering a humble gravedigger and savagely tears out his throat!

A series of unearthly howls, issuing from the cemetery, echo through the village,

driving its sleeping inhabitants out of their beds! Captain Montford and Dr. Lloyd venture into the graveyard to investigate, discovering Richardson's ravaged body! Lloyd determines the cause of death as another severed jugular vein. Examining the murder scene, Montford finds the tracks of an animal - a wolf!

The next morning, at the castle, Larry awakens in his bedroom and is startled to see a trail of fresh, muddy wolf tracks leading from the window into the room. He anxiously scuffs them off the carpet with his feet and wipes the rest off the window, he sees Montford and his posse following the wolf tracks that lead up to the house, as their dogs sniff the ground.

After Larry questions Dr. Lloyd, a guest at the castle, about werewolves, the doctor privately informs Sir John that his son has received a shock that has caused definite psychic maladjustment. He advises him to send Larry out of the village, but Sir John insists that Larry should stay home and prove his innocence. Dr. Lloyd warns that shock therapy is too dangerous for Larry in his present condition.

Convinced that a wild wolf killed Jenny Williams and Richardson, the villagers prepare to hunt it down, setting traps throughout the woods. Mrs. Williams observes, "It's very strange that there were no murders before Larry Talbot arrived!"

With nightfall, Larry transforms again and prowls into the marsh. Suddenly, the jaws of a steel trap clamp painfully around one of the Wolf Man's paws! Like the snared animal he is, the werewolf writhes in agony, struggling to release himself, finally collapsing in exhaustion.

Moments later, Maleva's wagon drives up and the wizened Gypsy woman climbs down. Hovering over the prone beast, looking upon his bestial features without flinching, she recites the same prayer she spoke over her own son's corpse in the crypt, pity in her eyes and compassion in her voice.

Her words have a strange, magical, soothing effect on the sleeping Wolf Man. His bristling paws become feet, once again. His furry, animalistic face reverts to the clean-shaven, but haggard visage of Larry Talbot. "Find peace for the moment, my son.", intones Maleva.

Talbot is unpleasantly surprised to wake up with his foot caught in a wolf trap, but, his human reasoning power restored, he releases himself from the trap and limps back toward the village.

Talbot makes an unexpected call on Gwen at the antique shop, confessing to killing Bela and Richardson, and announcing that he is leaving the village. As Gwen begs him to take her with him,

Larry glances at her palm and is terror-stricken to see a pentagram in it! Realizing that Gwen is fated to be his next victim, Larry, in desperation, runs away!

Back at the castle, when Sir John confronts him, Larry makes a full confession, revealing to his incredulous father everything about Bela, Maleva, Jenny, Richardson, Gwen and the pentagram. Determined to cure Larry of what he assumes to be a neurotic delusion, Sir John binds his son to a chair in his room, facing the window, so he can watch the wolf hunt.

Before his father leaves to join Montford and the other men, Larry begs him to take the silver-headed cane with him. Seeing no harm in complying with his son's request, Sir John takes the cane, locks the windows, bolts the door and leaves his son alone in the room.

In the foggy woods, the traps have been set and the hounds have been given the scent. The men catch sight of a bestial, half-human shape skulking through the shadowy timbers. In an instant, the air is filled with the sound of gunfire. The beast escapes, unharmed. Montford is certain that he hit the creature head-on, but Dr. Lloyd reminds him that killing a werewolf requires a silver bullet!

While combing the woods for the wolf, Sir John encounters Maleva, who he determines is the Gypsy that has filled Larry's mind with her "witch's tales" about werewolves. Their conversation is interrupted by the sound of gunshots! Sir John hastens in their direction.

Desperately searching for Larry, Gwen has ventured into the dangerous, nocturnal woodland to find him. She runs up to Maleva's wagon, asking the Gypsy if she has seen Larry. Maleva advises Gwen to come with her. "But, I've got to find him!", Gwen insists. "Come with me", urges Maleva, "or he will find you!"

Heedless of the Gypsy's warning, Gwen runs deeper into the woods. Suddenly, she is confronted by the sight of a monstrous, subhuman beast - the Wolf Man! As he lunges from behind the branches to attack, her, she screams!

Following Gwen's cries, Sir John comes

upon a terrifying scene - Gwen has fainted in the clutches of a half-human wolf-monster! Catching sight of Sir John, the Wolf Man drops the unconscious girl and pounces upon his new adversary!

Man and werewolf grapple in mortal combat! Sir John raises the silver-headed cane and brings it down upon the beast's skull! As the Wolf Man falls to the ground, Sir John continues to pummel it with blow after furious blow, until the battered beast lies still!

From out of the fog-shrouded woods, Maleva's wagon rolls into view. Climbing down, the wise old Gypsy leans over the dying Wolf Man and once again pronounces her prayer.

Before Sir John's unbelieving eyes, the bristled, bestial features of the ferocious Wolf Man melt away, leaving the pitiful, dead body of Larry Talbot.

"Your suffering is over", Maleva murmurs, "Now, you will find peace for eternity."

The hunters emerge from the trees and converge around the tragic scene of Sir John and his dead son. Frank helps Gwen to her feet. Sizing up the situation, Montford decides, "The wolf must have attacked her and Larry came to the rescue. I'm sorry, Sir John."

His soul shaken and numbed to its very roots, Sir John cannot reply.

In 1931, French writer-director Robert Florey submitted to Universal a short story titled, THE WOLF MAN, as a possible vehicle for Boris Karloff, who had rocketed to stardom as the Monster in FRANKENSTEIN. In Florey's treatment, Dr. Garnier of Paris is a 400-year-old werewolf, cursed by a witch to turn into a wolf when the moon is full, unless he is wearing a garland of wolfbane around his neck. He must kill each night or become a werewolf permanently.

A botanist, Garnier seeks to cultivate a flower that grows on wolfbane - the only antidote for his lycanthropic affliction. During a thunderstorm, Garnier's equipment is damaged. He becomes a werewolf and pursues his ward and her intended. After a spectacular chase, he is dispatched by the local infantry.

Universal's production head, Carl Laemmle, Jr., approved the story and teamed Florey with the studio's story editor, Richard Schayer, to adapt into a screenplay. Scheduled as a 1933 Karloff project, the script went through several rewrites by Ardel Wray and Joseph Laren Kelly.

Postponed in 1932, the project was revived in 1933, rewritten by Edmund Pearson, who set the opening in Tibet, changed the doctor's name to Glendon and set the remainder of the story in England. The wolfbane flower became

the "Mariphasa Lupina Lumina".

The script was re-worked by Robert Harris and John Colton and retitled, WEREWOLF OF LONDON. Henry Hull replaced Karloff as Dr. Glendon and Warner Oland was cast in a role intended for Bela Lugosi, as Dr. Yogami, a rival werewolf. WEREWOLF OF LONDON is an absorbing, underrated monster movie classic, highly recommended.

The release of Universal's SON OF FRANKENSTEIN in 1939 spurred the studio's great horror revival of the forties. Within two years, Universal released TOWER OF LONDON (1939), THE MUMMY'S HAND (1940), THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS (1940) and MAN MADE MONSTER (1941). The latter, directed by George Waffner, starred Lon Chaney, Jr. as Dynamo Dan the Electrical Man, a personable carnival performer who becomes the hapless guinea pig of a mad scientist (Lionel Atwill) who transforms him into a deadly, glowing human dynamo.

Under the direction of Waggner, Chaney demonstrated his ability to create a monster characterization that was both terrifying and sympathetic. For the success of MAN MADE MONSTER, Universal rewarded Waggner with a 7-year contract.

After scanning Universal's vaults for discarded movie titles, Waggner discovered THE WOLF MAN (a title often misprinted as THE WOLFMAN). Waggner assigned Curt Siodmak, who had written Universal's THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, BLACK FRIDAY and THE INVISIBLE WOMAN, to write a werewolf story, giving him a cast list (contract players Chaney, Claude Rains, Evelyn Ankers, Warren William, Ralph Bellamy and Maria Ouspenskaya), a setting (Wales), a production budget ($180,000) and a deadline (ten weeks). Waggner gave Siodmak a free hand, as far as content was concerned.

Siodmak threw out Florey's original script, which had evolved into WEREWOLF OF LONDON, creating an entirely original story. Most of the tale came directly from Siodmak's fertile imagination, based on Gaelic werewolf legends. He studied lycanthropy, an actual pathological condition, in which the unfortunate victim imagines himself to be a wolf and behaves accordingly.

Siodmak wrote a 69-page outline, which developed into a treatment, and then into

a first draft. The script went through three revisions before Siodmak's final draft. During the rewrites, the title changed from THE WOLF MAN to DESTINY, then back to THE WOLF MAN again. Siodmak finished the screenplay in seven weeks, three weeks ahead of schedule.

Siodmak's original name for Talbot's Welsh village was "LLANSILEFFRAILLERCHYMAIR", which he later changed to the more economical and easier-to-pronounce "Llanwelly", a name derived from that of an actual Welsh village, Llanelly. In the original treatment, Texas mechanic Don Hill arrives in the village to install a telescope in the manor house of Professor Talbot. Siodmak designed the character of Don Hill as an ordinary Everyman, like the guy next door - a role perfect for Chaney.

In another draft, Don Hill becomes Larry Gill, and Professor Talbot is now Sir John Talbot, whose manor house has become an ancient castle. In this version, Larry spies on Gwen through the telescope as she dresses in her room. Larry's telescopic voyeurism oddly anticipates James Stewart's in Hitchock's REAR WINDOW (1954).

In the crypt scene, Siodmak originally showed Bela in his coffin with his eyes open, wearing a sinister grin - still alive, but immobile. Bela's grin and the pentagram on his forehead vanish when Maleva touches his face with a flower during her prayer, which turns his evil grin into a peaceful smile.

Also included was a scene in which Larry wrestles with a bear at the Gypsy carnival, a sequence that was actually filmed but deleted from the final cut. The episode after he was bitten and before his first transformation. The sequence, like the Technicolor tests for SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, has become one of the most sought-after film clips for historians and fans.

Siodmak's earlier drafts contained considerably more visual symbolism and subjective camera angles than in the final film. Larry originally forged a silver bullet out of Maleva's charm and gave it to Frank, telling him to use it on the werewolf. Frank was to shoot the Wolf Man with the silver bullet after he attacked Gwen.

In one draft, Larry was intended to change completely into a wolf. After being shot, he was to revert to a hybrid, half-man/half-wolf state that rather closely resembled the Wolf Man's appearance in the actual film, before returning completely to human form in death.

Siodmak, himself, wrote the now-famous poem, which has often been mistaken for an authentic Gypsy rhyme:

"Even a man who is pure in heart
And says his prayers by night,
May become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms
And the autumn moon is bright."

First spoken in the film by Gwen Conliffe, the verse is repeated, in later scenes, by both Sir John and Jenny Williams. Siodmak reprised it in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943), changing the last line from "And the autumn moon is bright" to "And the moon is full and bright". The lyric was revived once again in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, with the word "wolf" replaced by "werewolf". While the moon was never shown in THE WOLF MAN, FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN was the first Wolf Man movie to include images of the full moon, establishing it as the catalyst for Talbot's metamorphosis, a detail that was retained in all the remaining films of the series.

Siodmak did not originally intend to show the face of the werewolf, except as a reflection in a mirror or in a pool of water. Waggner, however, preferred to show the Wolf Man directly, in all his furry, fanged glory, and insisted on lengthening Maleva's final prayer over Talbot's corpse.

Siodmak based Maleva's speech, which began, "The way you walked was thorny, through no fault of your own", on HARMATIA - an ancient Greek word, referring to the suffering of an innocent mortal by divine whim. Harmatia was the screenwriter's basic concept of THE WOLF MAN., the classic dramatic idea of undeserved misfortune befalling the lead character - the essence of pure tragedy.

Before filming began, the script was rewritten once again, to accommodate changes requested by Claude Rains, who was to play Sir John. Also added were the hunting accident that killed Larry's brother and the idea of having Sir John kill the Wolf Man with the silver-headed walking stick. Having Larry die at his father's hand considerably heightened the pathos of the story. Both the role of Sir John and the film itself ultimately benefited from these changes.

Siodmak's later scripts included THE INVISIBLE AGENT, FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN, SON OF DRACULA, THE CLIMAX, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS (1946). He wrote the famous science fiction novel, DONOVAN'S BRAIN (1943), co-wrote Val Lewton's I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943) and wrote and directed BRIDE OF THE GORILLA (1951) and CURUCU: BEAST OF THE AMAZON (1956).

The task of transforming Lon Chaney, Jr. into the Wolf Man went to the head of Universal's makeup department, the legendary Jack Pierce, who had created the classic makeup for the Frankenstein Monster and the Mummy.

For THE WOLF MAN, Pierce revived a test makeup for WEREWOLF OF LONDON that had been intended for Karloff but toned down for Henry Hull. Unable to find a satisfactory reference for a werewolf, Pierce relied on his own imagination for makeups for both WEREWOLF OF LONDON and THE WOLF MAN.

Pierce made a plaster life mask of Chaney, as a reference for his makeup design. Pierce's Wolf Man makeup, less complex than Karloff's Frankenstein disguise, required four hours to apply and consisted of the following ingredients:

A T-shaped, rubber nose appliance.

Yak hair bristles on the head, face and neck, applied one at a time, then singed for an animalistic effect.

Shredded kelp.

Yak-hair-covered rubber gloves (claws) and boots (paws).

A bridge of dental fangs.

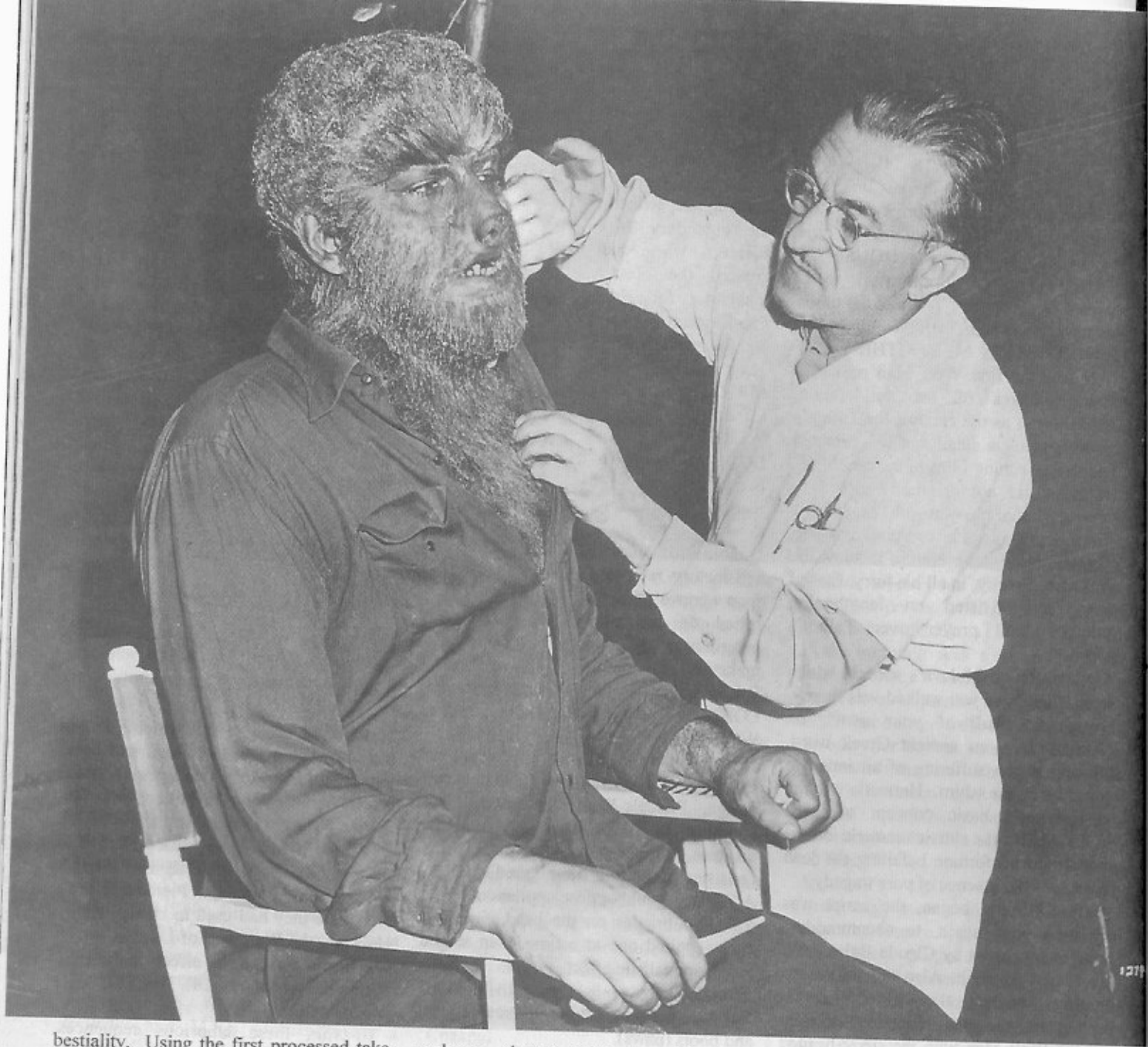
The nose and cheeks were given a coat of bright red greasepaint, which photographed "brown" in black and white.

The Wolf Man makeup was the most uncomfortable that Chaney was ever required to wear. He was unable to speak while wearing the fangs and had to sip a liquid lunch through a straw. Eventually, Pierce honed the application time down to 2 ½ hours. The disguise required 45 painful minutes to remove. Pierce reprised the Wolf Man makeup for a film version of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (1963).

For the scenes in which Talbot transforms into the Wolf Man and back, Pierce collaborated with special visual effects wizard John P. Fulton, who had made Claude Rains vanish in THE INVISIBLE MAN and caused Karloff to glow in the dark in THE INVISIBLE RAY (1936). Fulton and Pierce reprised a technique they had used to change Henry Hull into the Werewolf of London, which was inspired by similar effects in the 1931 Paramount version of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE.

To film these laborious sequences, Chaney was required to show up at the studio at 2:00 AM. Striking an appropriate pose, Chaney froze in place. Little nails were driven through the skin on the ends of his fingers to prevent him from moving. A plaster cast was made of the back of Chaney's head and the drapes behind him were starched. The camera was weighted down with a ton to eliminate jitter. Targets were place before Chaney's eyes.

With Chaney appropriately petrified, he was photographed for a few seconds. Then, while the film was taken to the lab for development, Chaney's entire makeup was removed and replaced by a new application of a more advanced stage of



bestiality. Using the first processed take as a reference, Chaney was re-positioned as necessary to match the previous shot.

When it came time to apply the rubber nose piece, the outline of Chaney's head was drawn on a glass plate for reference, so he could hit the exact same position for the next take. Pierce then led Chaney to his studio to complete this more complex phase of he change.

This process was repeated over and over, 21 times or more, until the transformation from man to werewolf was complete. It took about 22 hours to film an entire transformation, or even longer, if Chaney became impatient and ripped the makeup off his face. Fulton bridged the processed makeup phases with lap dissolves. Today's slick computer-generated "morphs" have rendered this technique obsolete, but these remarkable sequences by Fulton and Pierce still retain their precise, eerie fascination.

Fulton shot a rear-screen projection shot for the sequence of Larry's automobile-driven arrival at the village and a miniature for the establishing shot of Talbot Castle. He also created a "montage" sequence - a series of overlapping, bizarre, symbolic images that depict Larry's mental delirium before his first transformation.

Until HOUSE OF DRACULA in 1945, Pierce and Fulton continued to churn out their sublime Wolf Man transformations, which, along with Chaney's performances in the role, improved with each new film. Jack Pierce continued as the head of Universal's makeup department until 1947. John P. Fulton's work in THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN (1941) and THE INVISIBLE AGENT received Academy Award nominations and he won Oscars for WONDER MAN (1945) and THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (1956).

Claude Rains was no stranger to the monster movie genre, having made his film debut in James Whale's 1933 classic,

THE INVISIBLE MAN, followed by THE MAN WHO RECLAIMED HIS HEAD (1943) and THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD (1935). In 1943, Rains inherited the elder Lon Chaney's role in Universal's spectacular but diluted Technicolor remake of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA.

While serving in World War I, Rains had been gassed by the Germans, which gave him his distinctive, leathery voice. A former acting teacher at England's Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, Rains distinguished himself with fine performances in Warners' THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (1938), CASABLANCA (1942) and many others. He worked on THE WOLF MAN while under contract with Warners, and agreed to do so only if he received star billing and script approval.

Warren William provides solid support as the pragmatic Dr. Lloyd. After attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, William (formerly Warren Krech) accumulated substantial stage experience and appeared in many silent films before making the transition to talkies. Despite his skill as an actor, William's uncanny resemblance to the great John Barrymore seriously limited him, professionally. He played Julius Caesar in DeMille's CLEOPATRA (1934) and, in other films, starred as The Lone Wolf, Philo Vance and Perry Mason. He gave a memorable performance as D'Artagnan in James Whale's 1939 version of THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

Captain Paul Montford is sturdily portrayed by distinguished actor Ralph Bellamy, who also appeared in GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN and ROSEMARY'S BABY (1968). Looking back on his days at Universal in the forties, Bellamy remembered that the casts and crews really had fun making these films and that somehow, the fun photographed and transferred itself to the screen.

British stage actor Patric Knowles plays Gwen's fiancée, Frank Andrews. Knowles also appeared in THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (1938), FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN, FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON (1958) and TERROR IN THE WAX MUSEUM (1970).

Bela Lugosi provides a striking, memorable cameo performance as Bela the Gypsy fortune teller - weary of his terrible affliction and painfully dreading his next seizure. Lugosi originally wanted to play Larry Talbot, but lost the role to Chaney. After creating a sensation in the title role of DRACULA (1931), Lugosi created a remarkable series of sinister portrayals in other Universal shockers, including MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932), THE BLACK CAT (1934), THE RAVEN (1935) and SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939). His post-WOLF MAN work for Universal included GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, FRANKENSTEIN

MEETS THE WOLF MAN and ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN.

Maria Ouspenskaya is best remembered today for her work in THE WOLF MAN, as the wise, old Gypsy woman, Maleva, the cinema's leading authority on werewolf lore. Ouspenskaya was a member of the Moscow Art Theater and ran a New York acting school, the Academy of Dramatic Art. In America since 1923, Ouspenskaya received Academy Award nominations for DODSWORTH (1936) and LOVE AFFAIR (1939). She reprised the role of Maleva in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN and was also seen in TARZAN AND THE AMAZONS (1945).

Gwen Conliffe is sympathetically portrayed by Evelyn Ankers. Born in Valparaiso, Chile, of British parents, Ankers studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and acted in England on stage and screen. Her first film for Universal had been HOLD THAT GHOST (1941) with Abbott and Costello. Although the term, "screen queen" did not yet exist in 1941, after appearing in THE WOLF MAN, Ankers acquired the title of Universal's "Queen of the Horrors", appearing in such thrillers as THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1943), SON OF DRACULA (1943), THE MAD GHOUL (1943) and WEIRD WOMAN (1944).

Gwen's father, Charles Conliffe, is played by character actor J.M. Kerrigan, who had also appeared in WEREWOLF OF LONDON, as Dr. Glendon's assistant, Mr. Hawkins. Mild comic relief is supplied by Forrester Harvey as Montford's bubbling secretary, Mr. Twiddle.

Lon Chaney, Jr. was, of course, the son of the great Lon Chaney, the silent screen's legendary "Man of a Thousand Faces". Chaney, Sr. had made cinema history at Universal in the title roles of THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (1923) and THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925), before making a series of successful thrillers with Tod Browning at MGM.

His only son, Creighton Tull Chaney, was born in 1906. Chaney, Sr. forbade Creighton from pursuing an acting career, enrolling him in a trade school to learn the plumbing business. At a water heater company, Creighton labored as a boilermaker and was later promoted to secretary.

Lon Chaney, Sr. died in 1930. Two years later, Creighton signed a contract at RKO, playing bits in movies and starring in serials, but his contract was not renewed in 1933. Near starvation, Creighton very reluctantly changed his name to Lon Chaney, Jr. in 1935. Under 5 different names, Chaney worked as a stuntman, bit player, extra, supporting actor and lead. In 1937, Chaney signed with 20th Century Fox and played a series of unrewarding supporting roles.

In 1939, Chaney won the role of the tragic halfwit giant, Lennie, in the Hollywood stage production of John Steinbeck's OF MICE AND MEN, and was cast in the film version, soon after. His performance on film as Lennie won him critical praise and box-office stardom.

In 1940, Chaney played a prehistoric caveman in the original ONE MILLION B.C., for which he created an excellent makeup, which he was not allowed to wear in the film because of union rules.

In 1940, Chaney starred in Universal's MAN MADE MONSTER, giving a sensitive, powerful performance worthy of his father. Putting him under a 5-year contract, the studio marketed the actor as their new horror star, replacing Karloff and Lugosi. After THE WOLF MAN, Universal billed Chaney as "The Screen's Master Character Creator", casting him as the Frankenstein Monster in GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1942), Count Alucard/Dracula in SON OF DRACULA (1943, see CoF #27 for more details on this film) and the Mummy in THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1942), THE MUMMY'S GHOST (1944) and THE MUMMY'S CURSE (1945). Universal also gave Chaney leading roles in an offbeat series of "Inner Sanctum" mysteries.

But, more than any of these, it was his characterization of Larry Talbot/The Wolf Man that captured the public imagination. Fiercely protective of the role, Chaney wouldn't allow any other actor to play "his baby" and went on to play the Wolf Man again in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943), HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944), HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945) and ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (1948). As a result, the Wolf Man is the only Universal monster consistently played by the same actor throughout the series.

The Frankenstein Monster, Dracula and the Mummy varied erratically from one film to the next, each played by a variety of different performers, but the Wolf Man was played only by Chaney, who maintained a rock-steady continuity of quality in the role, becoming the most reliable Universal monster of them all.

Chaney played another werewolf in LA CASA DEL TERROR (1959) and briefly appeared in an imitation of Pierce's Wolf Man makeup in the legendary 1962 ROUTE 66 TV episode, LIZARD'S LEG AND OWLET'S WING, which reunited him with Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre.

Jack Otterson, the head of Universal's art department, was credited as THE WOLF MAN's art director, but Robert Boyle was the film's true production designer. Boyle

and cinematographer Joseph A. Valentine created an impressive display of studio atmospheres, ranging from the handsome luxury of the Talbot Castle interiors to the foggy netherworld of Llanwelly's Gypsy camp, nocturnal woods, marsh and churchyard.

The fog-shrouded marsh exteriors were built indoors, on a studio sound stage, to control the fog, which was old-fashioned, low-lying mineral oil studio fog. A temperature of 50 degrees was maintained on the set so that the fog would photograph properly. Fumes from the mineral oil fog irritated the cast and crew, causing Ankers to pass out, on one occasion.

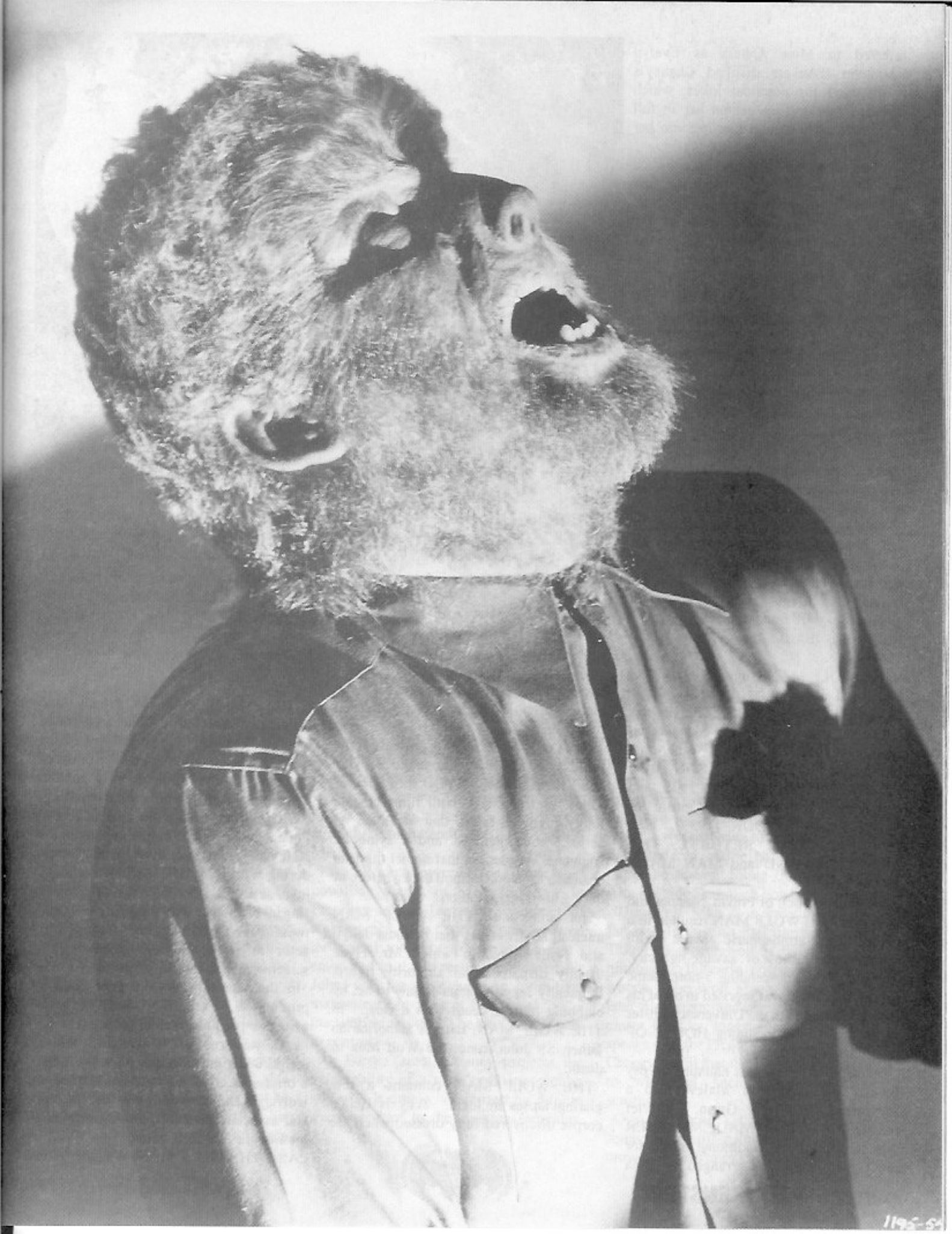
Boyle populated the forest with old backlot stumps and trees, painting most of them black and giving them a coat of glycerin to make them glisten eerily. Some of the dead trees had been used in ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT (1930), THE BLACK CAT (1934), FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS (1938) and SON OF FRANKENSTEIN.

For the forest scenes, Valentine created some impressive deep-focus effects with a wide angle lens and fast film. Boyle re-arranged the trees for different camera set-ups to make the forest appear even deeper. Those same trees appeared in many later Universal thrillers.

THE WOLF MAN made use of Universal's backlot European village (previously seen in THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME and FRANKENSTEIN, among many others), the Notre Dame cathedral facade built for THE HUNCHBACK and the Carfax Abbey exterior from DRACULA.

In the Gypsy carnival sequence, a traditional Gypsy dance was performed by La Riana, accompanied by Chico de Verdi and his Hungarian Gypsy Orchestra.

On the set of THE WOLF MAN, Chaney and Ankers developed a mutual animosity that was never evident on screen. Chaney



referred to Miss Ankers as Evelyn Shankers. Ankers disliked Chaney's predilection for practical jokes, which included sneaking up behind her in full Wolf Man makeup and snarling into her face.

Ankers also had a scary face-to-face confrontation with the live bear that performed in the deleted wrestling scene with Chaney (the bear actually tussled with a stuntman). The animal chased Miss Ankers around the set until crewmen subdued it by shining lights in its eyes.

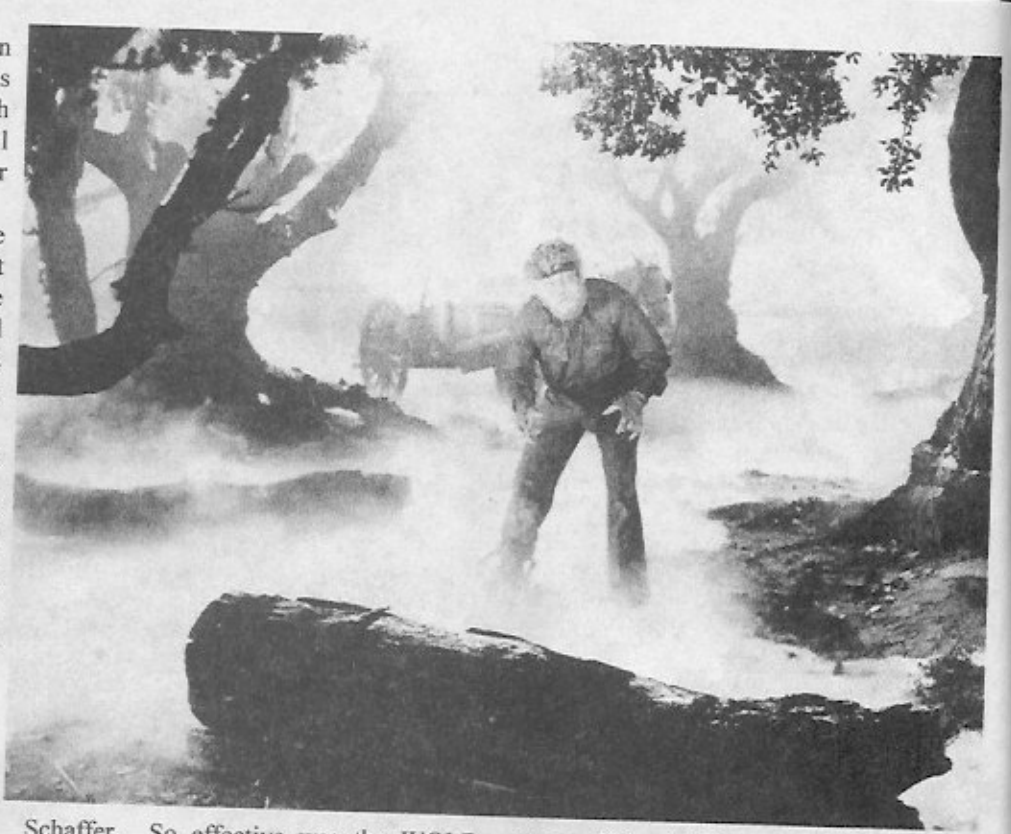
During the filming of the final battle between Sir John and the Wolf Man, Claude Rains got carried away with the excitement and passion of the moment and hit Chaney in the face, giving him a black eye. Chaney was sent home with an ice pack and the filming of the rest of the scenes for the day was postponed.

Bela in werewolf form was played by a German Shepherd named "Moose". While wrestling with Chaney for the scene in which Talbot battles the werewolf, Moose bit Chaney in the hand, breaking the bones between his thumb and forefinger. Despite the injury, or, perhaps, because of it, Chaney and Moose became fast friends and the dog could always recognize Lon on the set, no matter what outlandish disguise he was buried under.

THE WOLF MAN's musical score was composed by Charles Previn. Frank Skinner and Hans J. Salter. Previn was Universal's music director. Skinner and Salter were his associates. Salter had orchestrated Skinner's SON OF FRANKENSTEIN score in 1939 and collaborated with him on the music for TOWER OF LONDON (1939), THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, THE MUMMY'S HAND and MAN MADE MONSTER.

The collaboration of Previn, Skinner and Salter on THE WOLF MAN resulted in a compelling, atmospheric score with appropriate flashes of savage ferocity. The distinctive, descending 3-note theme for the Wolf Man was reprised in all of his later appearances in the Universal monster series, up to and including HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945).

The score also contains haunting Gypsy themes for Bela and Maleva and a romantic leitmotif for Gwen. A brief music cue from MAN MADE MONSTER was reprised. The traditional music for the Gypsy camp was arranged by Bela Schaffer. So effective was the WOLF MAN score that Universal re-used it in many of their later films, including the Sherlock Holmes series.



Released in December, 1941, commemorating Universal's 10th year as the industry's leading producer of horror films, THE WOLF MAN was the studio's most successful film of the holiday season. After its release, Chaney received more fan mail than any other Universal star.

THE WOLF MAN was released the same year as MGM's remake of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE with Spencer Tracy. Interestingly, both films contain foggy night exteriors that establish an eerie atmosphere, and symbolic "montage" sequences that depict the lead character's mental turmoil either before or during his transformation.

The climax of THE WOLF MAN interestingly reverses that of most Jekyll and Hyde films, in which Mr. Hyde usually dispatches an authority figure, frequently Jekyll's father-in-law-to-be, by clubbing him to death with a cane. In THE WOLF MAN, Larry's authoritarian father, Sir John, canes the Wolf Man to death.

THE WOLF MAN contains a few glaring lapses in logic. Why is Bela's corpse discovered fully dressed when the werewolf that killed Jenny had no clothes? Why does Bela as a werewolf look more like a real wolf than Larry does as the Wolf Man? After her discussion with Larry, why does Maleva warn the other Gypsies that there is a werewolf in camp, after touring with Bela for years? After Larry's first transformation, why does the Wolf Man put on a shirt before skulking into the woods?

THE WOLF MAN is briskly and efficiently directed by the underrated George Waggner, rejecting many of the gimmicks written into the earlier drafts of Siodmak's script in favor of a subtler, more straightforward directorial approach.

Waggner had been a pre-med student at Philadelphia College before serving in the National Guard and, later, in the Army, during World War I. He labored at many jobs, as a trick rider, boxer, riding coach, singer, bit player and songwriter. In the twenties, Waggner became a supporting actor in silent movies, graduating to screenwriting in the early thirties.

In the late thirties, Waggner became production executive Trem Carr's associate produce, then produced a series of B westerns for Universal, writing scripts under the alias, Joseph West. After a brief stint at Monogram, he returned to Universal and worked as a writer, director and associate producer, while continuing his sideline as a songwriter.

After THE WOLF MAN, Waggner went

on to produce GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, THE INVISIBLE AGENT (1942), FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943), THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1943) and THE CLIMAX (1944).

The innate ability of Lon Chaney, the elder, to evoke audience sympathy for characters who were deformed, crippled and disfigured was somehow passed on to his son, who was equally adept at creating the same kind of pathos in characters like Lennie, Dynamo Dan and Larry Talbot the Wolf Man.

In later years, Chaney looked back on THE WOLF MAN as his best film and most creatively satisfying role. Chaney's Frankenstein Monster and Mummy were overshadowed by Karloff's and his Dracula was no match for Lugosi's, but he made the role of the Wolf Man truly his own. Although his greatest performance was as Lennie in OF MICE AND MEN, and he played a diverse gallery of character roles in a variety of genres, including monster movies, mysteries, westerns, comedies and gangster pictures, to this day, Lon Chaney, Jr. is still most strongly remembered for THE WOLF MAN.

Like all movie werewolves, Larry is an unwilling victim of his affliction. In Freudian terms, Larry is a portrait of ambivalence. His "ego" is torn between the social morality of his "super-ego", embodied in the hyper-paternalism of Sir John, and the overwhelming, primitive, malevolent impulses of his bestial "id" - the Wolf Man - which he struggles in vain to control.

As Larry Talbot, Chaney projects the vulnerability of a nice, ordinary, regular guy who is cruelly victimized by fate, in sharp contrast to the cunning ferocious, fantastic Wolf Man, one of the most distinctive of all movie monsters, a corporeal incarnation of a mythological nightmare. The Wolf Man is every inch the kind of unearthly creature Count Dracula was referring to when he spoke of the "Children of the Night" - and what music he makes, filling the foggy night with his blood-curdling howls!

The Wolf Man is a creature of pure fantasy. In this, his first film appearance. Talbot as a werewolf is only fleetingly glimpsed in the eerie, nocturnal Llanwelly woods. The Wolf Man's appearances in later films permitted the audience to get a closer, brighter, longer look at him, and it speaks well for Pierce's craftsmanship and Chaney's skill that the Wolf Man was able to withstand such intense audience scrutiny.

Over the decades, Larry Talbot has had some rather stiff competition from other movie lycanthropes, notably Henry Hull

in WEREWOLF OF LONDON, Michael Landon in I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF and Oliver Reed in CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, but Chaney's Wolf Man is still most widely regarded as the cinema's quintessential werewolf, displaying far more personality than many of the computer-generated and animatronic puppets that pass for today's movie lycanthropes.

No other movie werewolf could stalk its prey quite like Chaney's Wolf Man. The Wolf Man prowl is fascinating - arms held before him, crouched over and walking on his toes as if his feet had indeed become the paws of a wolf.

Chaney's Wolf Man matches the best work of Karloff, Lugosi and even Chaney's own father, the great Lon Chaney, Sr. Chaney's lycanthropic characterization is, of course, greatly enhanced by the makeup wizardry of Jack Pierce, which, although elaborate, does not entirely conceal Chaney's own features. In the Pierce makeup, Chaney's beast displays an interesting range of facial expressions, from cunning, sidelong leers to savage, fang-bearing snarls.

THE WOLF MAN benefits tremendously from the sterling, intelligent performance of Claude Rains as the proud, domineering, patriarchal Sir John Talbot, who tries in vain to prevent his son's inevitable doom. Although he means well and displays genuine concern for Larry's health and well-being, Sir John tries too hard to mold Larry - to force him to conform to his image of what a Talbot should be - a son he can be proud of.

Rather than send his son out of the village, as Dr. Lloyd advises, Sir John is determined to force his son to face his accusers and exonerate himself. Dr. Lloyd warns that shock therapy is too dangerous for Larry, but both he and Sir John are wrong. In or out of Llanwelly village, there is not hope for Larry. Once infected by the bite of a werewolf, he is doomed.

Maleva and Sir John are rivals for control of Larry, who is torn between his father's 20th Century pragmatism and the Gypsy woman's Old World superstition. Realist that he is, Sir John rigidly refuses to accept the absurd idea that Larry could be a werewolf. He view's Larry's bestial "other self" as a delusion that must be destroyed. At the end, Sir John succeeds

in bludgeoning Larry's feral alter-ego to death, but at a price he did not intend to pay - the life of his son.

This illustrates the innate tragedy of the Wolf Man - his only release is death. Time and again, throughout the Universal series, Talbot would desperately search for release from the curse of the pentagram, either through some scientific cure or by a peaceful death.

The only character in THE WOLF MAN who really understands what's going on is Maleva. In the film, her function is somewhat similar to vampire hunter Dr. Van Helsing's in DRACULA, to explain the supernatural to unbelievers, but, unlike Van Helsing, Maleva does not try to hunt down and destroy the principal menace. She is, instead, the Wolf Man's protector, endeavoring to help him better understand his unfortunate plight and relieving his suffering whenever possible. She is even able to reverse the transformation with her spells. Maleva truly has the power to soothe the savage beast!

Unlike other, more light-hearted forties monster thrillers, THE WOLF MAN lacks the typical, contrived, mundane "happy ending", for Siodmak and Waggner recognized the story of Larry Talbot as the stuff of genuine tragedy that progresses fatalistically to the film's inevitable, downbeat ending, with both Gwen and Sir John grieving over Larry's corpse.

Of the series of efficient, entertaining, assembly-line monster thrillers that Universal produced in the forties, THE WOLF MAN is clearly the best, blending fantastic, action-packed thrills with the pathos of its uncompromising tragedy, enhanced by fine performances from a distinguished cast. Chaney's Wolf Man is one of the most powerful figures of screen mythology and THE WOLF MAN is considered by many to be the definitive werewolf film. It is, without question, the most famous and successful work of lycanthropic cinema.

In 1957, THE WOLF MAN was included in Screen Gems' SHOCK THEATER TV movie package, which brought the classic monster of the thirties and forties to a whole new generation of television viewers. Like Dracula, the Frankenstein Monster and the Mummy, The Wolf Man has become an icon of popular culture, commemorated on everything from action figures, model kits, games, bubble bath, T-shirts, caps, drinking mugs, pens and keychains.

The character has even been immortalized in the field of popular music, as in Bobby "Boris" Pickett's song, "Wolfbane", on the original "Monster Mash" record album and in the lyrics of Warren Zevon's "Werewolves of London", in which even the name of Lon

Chaney, Jr. is mentioned. THE WOLF MAN has also been successfully transferred to home video, appearing on videocassettes, laserdisks and DVDs.

In 1997, Lon Chaney, Jr.'s Wolf Man joined his father's Phantom of The Opera, Lugosi's Dracula and Karloff's Frankenstein Monster and Mummy on a series of U. S. postage stamps commemorating five of the greatest "Classic Movie Monsters", giving Wolf Man fans all over the country something to howl about!

The continuing popularity of THE WOLF MAN proves that Maleva was wrong, after all. Poor Larry Talbot will never find peace, but will, for all eternity, continue to turn from man to beast and prowl the foggy backwoods of our darkest nightmares, his bone-chilling howl eerily reverberating through the night air, whenever the wolfbane blooms and the moon is full and bright!

An Interview with Ron Chaney Lon Chaney Jr.'s Grandson COMES OUT TO HOWL!

by Ron Adams

Ron Chaney is the grandson of Lon Chaney Jr., and it follows, is the great grandson of Lon Chaney Sr. He's a bright, sincere and wonderful human being to know. And, most importantly, he loved his grandfather and spent a lot of time in his younger years with him. His sincerity and care for perpetuating the images of his grandfathers is a life pursuit, along with keeping the family in the entertainment business! Ron is the president of Chaney Entertainment (formerly Chaney Enterprises). On February 15, 2000, I spoke with Ron and asked him the following questions to help satisfy the ever growing fans of the Chaney family.

What are your favorite Lon Chaney Jr. movies?

Favorites...well, OF MICE AND MEN, THE WOLF MAN, FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN and I really enjoy HIGH NOON. Actually, I like 'em all (laughing). Just great to see my "Gramps" in the movies.

How did your grandfather feel about the Wolf Man?

It was his favorite character. He had a great fondness for the Wolf Man; and his dual personality.

Did your grandfather ever talk about his father?

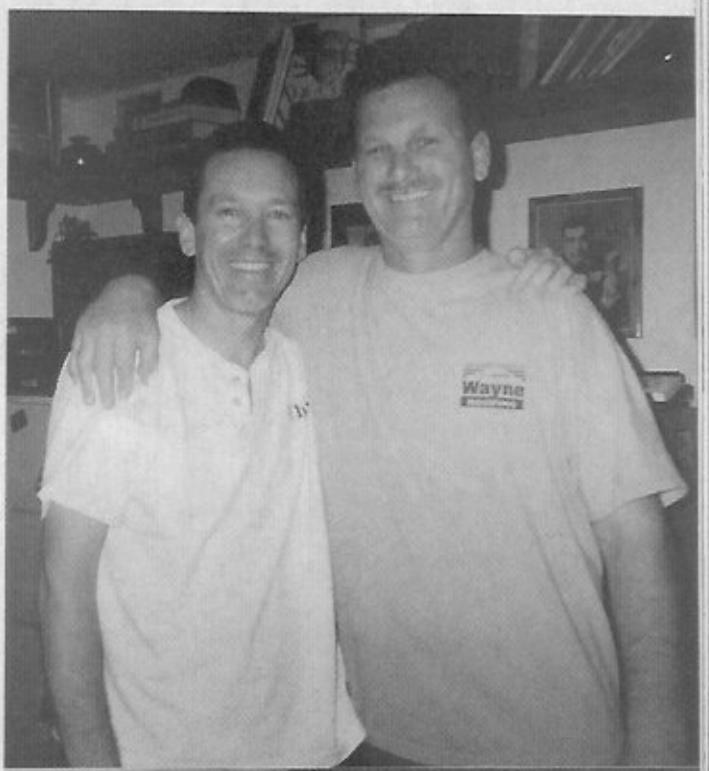
Sure, he occasionally spoke about his father. He used to talk a lot about his father practicing for his role in THE PENALTY. He said he would rehearse at home walking around in the stumps and how it would hurt him. He'd walk around trying to get the balance down, so it wouldn't waste production time. (Chaney Sr. played a legless man, very convincingly, in the film THE PENALTY from 1920 and without any CGI special effects)

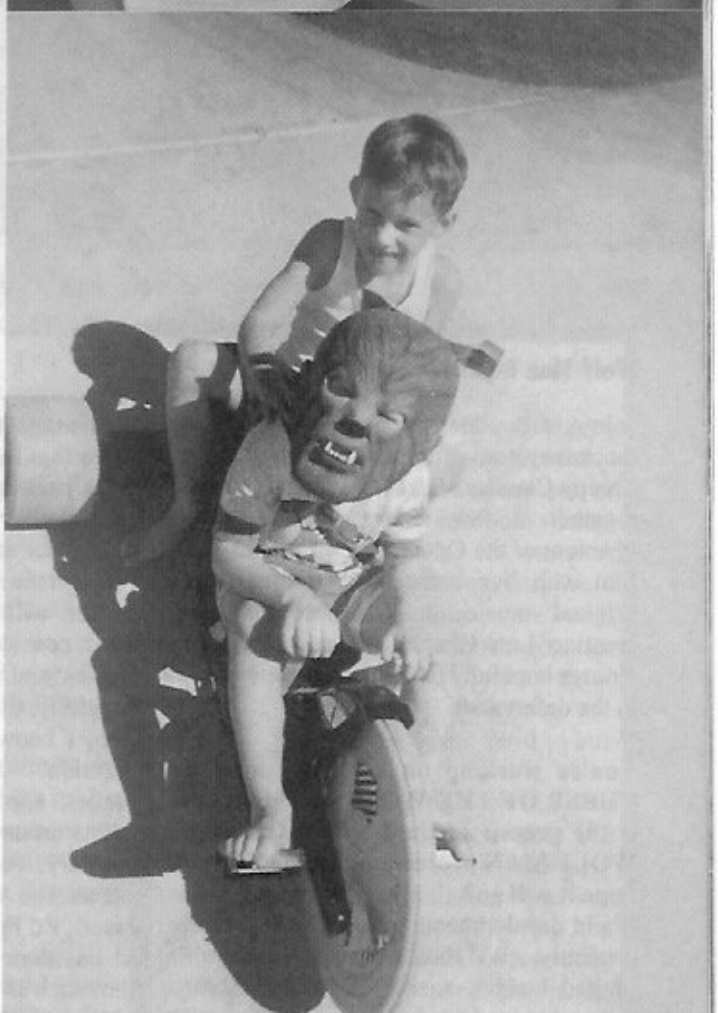
How did Chaney Enterprises, now Chaney Entertainment come about?

Wow, let me think. I guess the genesis was when my brother Gary and I were moving our grandma Patsy in San Diego and found boxes which contained the materials, photos, comments etc. that my grandfather had been assembling for the picture book "A Century of Chaney's." It revealed a part of our family past that I found very exciting. You can look for it in the future. I'm involved in so many projects right now, it is temporarily on the back burner.

Most people don't realize how very active Chaney Entertainment is...can you tell us some future projects to look forward to?

There will continue to be new products licensed through Universal and Chaney Entertainment, t-shirts, models...Sideshow's Phantom polystone, Hunchback of Notre Dame. The polystone Wolf Man is doing very well and a company named Westland Giftware is developing several Chaney character figurines and waterglobes. I've seen some photos of the early sculpts, very nice, also Janus Co. will be releasing the long overdue "The Phantom of the Opera" in the near future, the fans will





(Top) Ron and Gary Chaney. grandsons of Lon Chaney. Jr.
(Bottom) The legacy rolls on with Lonnie Chaney (Ron Chaney's nephew) and Creighton Chaney (in the mask). Ron's son.

Ron Chaney as The Wolf Man in his new film teaser project THE CURSE OF THE WOLF MAN from the Phantom Productions division of Chaney Entertainment. This teaser film will be shown at MONSTER BASH Summer 2000! The Wolf Man legacy is back!

enjoy this one. Coming soon is lonchaney.com in cooperation with Creepy Classics Video! I've been putting together a few shows such as The Phantom of the Opera 1925 original silent film with live orchestra performing the original music, and am working on creating Lon Chaney presents Haunted Houses hopefully to debut next Halloween in the desert area.

You're working on a movie project! CURSE OF THE WOLF MAN! What is the genesis of the CURSE OF THE WOLF MAN project and where do you hope it will go?

It's in development, looking for investors presently. We shot a short teaser film - limited budget, a short feature to show folks what we have in mind.

Now the teaser film has played at The Nortel Palm Springs International Film Festival on the West Coast, right? And we're looking forward to an east coast sneak peek at the Monster Bash!

Yes, similar to the film festival, I'm looking for an audience reaction to gauge if I'm on the right track. I'm not sure how the fans will react and it may be a tough crowd considering their knowledge of the classics and my grandfather's portrayal. Hopefully, they will like the concept, and if so, I know we're heading in the right direction. Just make sure there's no torches, explosives or guns with silver bullets around just in case. I conceived the story, co-produced and acted in the part as The Wolf Man in this 9½ minute teaser. Ed French was the make-up artist. Ed has done some great work in major films such as Eraser, Batman Returns, Star Trek VI - The Undiscovered Country in which he was nominated for an Academy Award along with Emmy nominations for Space Rangers and Star Trek-The Next Generation along with television and commercial work. My partner Rich Oliphant, wrote, co-produced and directed this teaser. We're very excited about it.

Bob Burns is bringing the original Wolf Man cane to the Monster Bash...I see photo ops already for the fans. with you and the original prop cane. Do you know collector/actor Bob Burns?

Oh yeah, been to his house...he's wonderful.

Can you tell us about the Lon Chaney Jr. Star Fund?

The "Star Fund" is to put Lon Chaney Jr. on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Something for the fans. We'll have information about donating to the Star Fund on the forthcoming website, lonchaney.com. Every contributor will

get listed on the web site. I've been keeping track of everybody. It went up in cost, it was ten thousand, they've since upped it to fifteen thousand to get a star on the Walk. We'll get there in time.

We'll be taking donations for the Lon Chaney Jr. Star Fund at registration during the summer's Monster Bash and taking everyone's name who donates, so they can be added to the web site. Lon Jr. needs to be on the Hollywood Walk!

I couldn't agree more. All efforts are much appreciated. I'm not looking for big donations, the more fan involvement the better. I prefer more of a grass roots movement of support similar to the stamp campaigns.

Well your grandfather would have turned 94 just a few days ago. On a last note, can you bring to the table, what none of the historians studying the films really can, which is give us a slice of real life with Lon Chaney Jr.? Perhaps just a snippet of a memory over a dinner at your grandparent's house back in the 60's or early 70's?

Yes, I wished him a personal Happy Birthday, I'm sure along with many others. Well, I would have to say one of the fondest memories is, we would wrestle with him in the backyard. He was very good. He'd show us all the moves. We'd try to pull them off on him. We could never get him down, naaaa, not even when we ganged up on him!

By we, you mean you and your brother?

Yeah, Gary and I ganged up on him, but we could never...(laughing), get him down. He loved to cook, he had great recipes, chili and great dishes. He was just a wonderful storyteller. Hearing him tell stories was wonderful. He made them come alive, really...he used his hands, voice and face so much for expression.

Thank you Ron from me, personally, and all the other scores and scores of Lon Chaney, Jr. fans.

Frank Dietz's The Sketch Files Presents

THE WOLF MAN

For five films, Lon Chaney Jr. stalked the fog-shrouded Universal soundstages as tortured soul Larry Talbot. Despite his lycanthropic troubles, ***The Wolf Man*** still found time to score with the ladies. The lovely Evelyn Ankers, Martha O'Driscoll and beautiful gypsy Elena Verdugo all seemed to find the silver lining in Larry's darkened clouds...

Frank F. Dietz

When Larry wasn't making time with the babes, he was usually trying to find a way out of his hairy predicament...and this very often led to some major league lapel-grabbing. Larry could clamp onto a man's coat lapel and throttle him like nobody else. Dr. Neimann in ***House Of Frankenstein***, Lou Costello, and even the Festival Of The New Wine Guy (below) all felt the fisted rage of the frustrated werewolf...

In his second film appearance, Larry befriended and later duked it out with The Frankenstein Monster, played by Bela Lugosi (left). The Wolf Man would then encounter Glenn Strange as The Big Guy three times, even "destroying" him in ***House Of Dracula*** ...before they both returned for their final bows in the 1948 classic ***Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein***.

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Can a Famous Singing Cowboy Save the Surface-World???

FIND OUT

In:

THE PHANTOM EMPIRE

...In 12 SIZZLING Episodes!!!

by Jeff "THE CLIFF-HANGER" Kurta

I grew up possessing a tremendously high regard for the Black and White film classics, semi-classics, and even the "not-so-classics". At a very early age, I developed an immense inner satisfaction for film. Period. I was (and still am!) an avid fan of those ALL-COLOR SPECTACULARS, and yes, even GONE WITH THE WIND, enters immediately into "my Big Picture. Of course MGM's THE WIZARD OF OZ, was a strong perennial favorite, provided on my innocent behalf, by way of the family console model television set. Today, my inner love for film (whether good or bad), most especially the vintage offerings of yesterday, remains totally and proudly intact, and untarnished.

The vast majority of this wonderful discipline, was ushered forth and to life, through my loving parents. They were reared in a fabulous era, filled to-the-brim with many a spell-binding splendor, from a very cinematic standpoint. I was nurtured and nourished on the same! While I was not there (sadly!) to play witness to all that theatrical excitement of a bygone time first-hand (such as my folks indeed had), getting second-hand inside scoops, proved to be nearly as terrific! The next best thing to actually being there! Through their own thoroughly fascinating true tales of early life experiences at the area movie theatres, a huge chunk of "what was", ended up having a gigantic impact on my own young life. And very welcome household hints they were! Very naturally, television, video, and books, only added to my merriment. I take a moment now, to personally and proudly, salute THE EARLY MOVIE, THE SCIENCE FICTION EARLY MOVIE, THE MATINEE MONEY MOVIE, PBS' 1980's MATINEE AT THE BIJOU series, SHOCK THEATRE, CREATURE FEATURES, and THE LATE SHOW. I know I must be leaving out a few very honorable mentionables! For there are indeed, many, many "responsible parties"! Most of all, however, I salute my very dear Mother..."the most responsible party of them all"!!! To this end then, I say "THANKS".

At a very tender age, I had begun to really "melt" from within. Family banter around the house, oftentimes centered around the magical world of cinema. Such harmless chatter covered all the "necessary" angles - - - the B westerns, fantasy efforts, monsteramas, cartoon spectaculars, jungle fare, comedy capers galore (THE THREE STOOGES, LAUREL AND HARDY, THE MARX BROTHERS, ABBOTT AND COSTELLO, THE BOWERY BOYS, et al!), DISNEY family-oriented fare, and the likes of. It was really more than my poor heart could stand!!! So, I was actually prepared in advance, before I even had the divine opportunity, to actually witness any film achievements!

THE REX THEATRE, which has been only a dusty memory for literal decades already, was home to hundreds of screaming area youngsters, during the 1930's, 40's, and 50's. An inviting "sanctuary" of sorts if you will, where the kiddies might go and unwind for a Saturday afternoon, or perhaps even a Friday night. "THE REX", was located right in the center of downtown Ironwood (Michigan, my hometown). Yes the little rascals could let off abundant steam at a Saturday afternoon matinee, where sometimes "monkeying around", was much more important, than what was taking place down-screen! The smell of fresh popcorn filled the air, giggles and all-out laughter, and the presence of flashlight carrying teenage ushers...all ideally helped to make the theatre "experience" something that no one can even dare to forget. The matinee-life, was a perfect way in which to escape the real, sometimes very scary world around us all. Whether it was that bummed-out/burned-out feeling, from the boredom of yet another long hectic school week, or the normal rigors of "the summer blues", the movie houses always saved us. Well, MANY of us, at any rate! Saturday afternoons (beginning at 2), is where Mom spent many an hour, peering unhindered, at the giant silver screen. Evenings were something else too, as Mom relayed to me of her numerous journeys to "THE REX"...where she was nearly scared to death by the nightmarish sight of - - - THE WOLF MAN, THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER, DRACULA, and THE MUMMY! It did not aid matters in the very least either, as Mom's only brother Wallace (my late uncle), would oftentimes accompany her to an evening horrorfest. Uncle Wally, would walk home with Mom, and then out of the "Black", dart off into the eerie shadows. With a full moon glowing brightly directly behind his immense form, he would leap out of the thick bushes...only to become THE WOLF MAN!!! His hair was quite thick and very curly, and accompanied by serious sounding growls and snarls, it almost seemed like Lon Chaney had followed poor Mom home! I guess you might look at those nights as "extra added-attractions"! But not for Mom, who was still feeling quite petrified hours after each incident. Needless to utter, she has never forgotten those days (and NIGHTS)!

Mom still brings those nostalgic experiences to new life these days, whenever our conversations might veer off into chatting about the ghoulden old days, and her silver age theatre attendings. Those were indeed "THE GOOD OL' DAYS", at least when it came to treating one's self to the movies. For many kids (such as Mom then), extra spending cash was awfully difficult to come by. But once a single nickel or dime was donated, they became instant cherishibles. At least until they would reach the movie theatre or drugstore! Many kids had "allowances", and could not wait to spend their hard-earned dimes on the newest superhero comic books! You could take a drugstore BATMAN comics title home with you then, for merely TEN CENTS! In fact, all comics cost only one whole dime then (in the 1940's)!!! Theatre popcorn sold for a whopping 10¢ (earlier still, it was 5¢ per box!), and the movie tickets themselves...all of TEN CENTS per patron! An immediately following say a Gene Autry western double-feature, Universal monster romp, or possibly even the latest Walt Disney animated cartoon feature picture, why not head over to the friendly neighborhood drugstore. For what you say?? Why, only the biggest and thickest (and not to mention the "tastiest"!) malted milkshake. The cost? One whole quarter! I will never actually be able to fully comprehend what those glorious early times must have been all about, but I sure do relish lending an ear to the marvelously delightful tales, as they're spun. Pure Gold!!!

It was dear Mom, who informed me of the vintage movie news-reels, and something odd called "serials" (at the time I was a tad confused...WHEATIES, of FRANKENBERRY??!!). While the vast majority of the kiddies in the theatre audience would fastly lose interest, whenever the screen lit up with scenes of the latest world disasters and the sickly reminders of the ravages of war, it was something else again, when it came time for the latest spine-tingling serialized escapade. I was a very young lad, when Mom clued me in on those long ago weekly action-packed "cliff-hangers". How magnificently splendid it must have been then, for a child with wide eyes of awe and wonder! For 12, 13, and sometimes 15 weeks, young eyes would stare, with legs nearly numb, as all forms of fast-moving fascinations would parade into full view...and all in breath-taking Black and White!

Mom, brother Wallace, and tons of other kids would sit spellbound and rooted, as they played witness to either BUCK ROGERS of FLASH GORDON conquering the galaxy; THE PHANTOM - "The Ghost Who Walks", as he protected his secret jungle lair and the mighty Skull-Cavel or maybe even George W. Trendle's daring and resourceful "masked rider of the plains", as he captured and brought in the vile nasties (and long before actor Clayton Moore would make the popular radio hero's image famous). Youngsters who grew up without the wonder of "TV" in those days, found much of their joys, sitting in front of the family radio. How terrific it must have been, to be able to form your own conclusions, utilizing only your imagination. The "mind's eye", what a truly beautiful "invention"! And to finally see THE LONE RANGER up there on the screen, and as big as life (only MUCH bigger!), having seemingly leaped directly from WXYZ's radio airwaves! With the advent of the sound motion picture serials, kids could finally see their favorite radio heroes breathe and walk! I can only imagine (and dream!), what it must have been really like. I thank Mom, for the many wondrous insights.

The movie serials, kept both the kiddies and the adults on the edge of their seats, time and time again. All "cliff-hangers" were produced with very limited cash resources, but did not in any way, shape, or form, hamper the always abundant excitement, building before one's eyes. To the younger minds, such sights were purely incredible!!! Each weekly continued "short segment", would always climax with a cliff-hanging scene (no matter the title of the chapterplay), guaranteed to keep the audiences coming back for more. You had to see how it all turned out!!! A serial-installment would come to an end, always with some poor fellow dangling for his life! Or any of the following: Our masked hero or cowboy icon, gasping for his life; A landslide that may destroy everything in its destructive path; An alien danger, in the form of a death-ray, aimed at all of earth's populace; and etc. The movie serials always kept you guessing what might happen the following week...but you just had to be there, to find out the reel-real truth! The serials not only kept their heroes in dire peril until the following Saturday afternoon, but the audience participant as well. Hence the handle "Cliff-hanger". The theatre goer was always left hanging by a thin thread, until the very next shockingly realistic chapter. One could always count on the motion picture serials to entertain.

And entertain they did, right up to the year 1956. By that time, interest in B westerns and serials had waned, mostly due to the fact of TV's quickly emerging influence. Why attend your local movie house, when you could stay at home, and be bedazzled for absolutely F-R-E-E??? Movie cowboy heroes such as Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Lash Larue, Hopalong Cassidy, and The Lone Ranger, had already found a comfortable niche in your living rooms. But the movie serial was a welcome invention to be sure, and thanks to video today, one can finally see for

positive, what all the fuss was about. Many such low budgeteers are readily available via video! Check them out!

Many eyes bulged out of their respective sockets, as one heroic do-gooder after another, was seemingly lowered to his sudden and ever-so-shocking doom..only to find out the next week, that all was well, and that a very clever escape was engineered! SUPERMAN, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE GREEN HORNET, THE MASKED MARVEL, ZORRO, COMMANDO CODY, CAPTAIN VIDEO, BATMAN and TARZAN (and then some!), lived to fight on!!! Many of you faithful CoF readers out there, may very well have witnessed a few "original" cliff-hangers, during your lifetime. You may have lived and thrived, at the height of the sound serials popularity. My Mother is just one fine primo example!

Television tried to cash-in on the cliff-hanging format, but only managed mild-like results. The first three introductory TV episodes of ABC TV's THE LONE RANGER (1949-57), were presented in cliff-hanging fashion, when Clayton Moore (the man most identified with the great masked western character today!), first donned that familiar dark disguise. The idea was quickly dropped however. Moore had made a name for himself in the motion picture serials (as both slimy villains, and handsome rescuers), beginning with Republic Pictures' super serial THE PERILS OF NYOKA, in 1942. He steadfastly continued in the shoe-string programmers for numerous years (even after having become a household name as the owner of the great white steed "SILVER"!), finally drawing that particular career to a close, in 1954. Moore either starred, or was a serial feature-player, for both Republic and Columbia Pictures.

Many future superstars got their start in the quickly made movie serials. In fact, John Wayne was helped by such kiddie endeavors, by appearing in a handful of such near-forgotten efforts, for both Mascot Pictures and Republic. Yes dear readers, THE DUKE was indeed a serials star! Actor Tom Tyler, was already established, when he was hired to portray both CAPTAIN MARVEL and THE PHANTOM, in two of the greatest chapterplays ever produced! And who can ever forget the big western film star, as the very first movie "Kharis"?! I can only be referring to Universal Pictures'

MAT LEVINE presents
THE PHANTOM EMPIRE
MOST SPECTACULAR SERIAL OF THE AGE
12 SMASHING . . . SPELL-BINDING EPISODES!..A Nation 20,000 feet under-ground..and 500 years ahead of the times!..

"THE MUMMY'S HAND" (1940), of course! Other notables, who had basically begun their motion picture careers in the movie cliff-hangers: Larry "Buster" Crabbe, Kirk Alyn (SUPERMAN-BLACKHAWK), John Hart (that other TV LONE RANGER!), Henry Brix (better known under the name of Bruce Bennett!), Kane Richmond, and so many others. By the way, Clayton Moore had at one time, been billed as the "KING of the SERIALS"...and rightly so.

The leader of the pack, in terms of having churned out the best action-packed, quality-laden cliff-hangers, was very easily Republic. Always filled with two-fisted thrills, pulse-pounding music, and eye-popping stunts, Republic lead the way, very especially during the 1940's. Universal and Columbia turned out some memorable gems as well. And back to television for a moment. ABC TV's BATMAN series, brought the cliff-hanger format into our living rooms (in glorious color too!), and twice weekly! Although a huge sure-fire hit at first, the novelty soon wore off, and the final installments were aired as "complete" halfhours. No doubt, the overall camp effect had run its course. DARK SHADOWS lived by the daily "chapter", and as a serial of sorts, had a nifty successful five year run. The modern "soap opera", can also be traced back to the days of the movie serials. Everything as to start from somewhere!

In 1935, Mascot Pictures, a tiny studio outfit, entered science fiction into their serials roster...in not one, but two efforts. The other will be talked about later. The subject of this very article "THE PHANTOM EMPIRE", a pretty crude offering at best (but still miles and miles of fun!), launched the film career of radio's premier singing cowboy, and in the process, ended up giving birth to a real legend!!! THE PHANTOM EMPIRE (known as RADIO RANCH, GENE AUTRY'S PHANTOM EMPIRE, or MEN WITH STEEL FACES, in its condensed feature form), is considered to be the very first sci-fi movie serial, beating FLASH GORDON, by one whole year! Cowboys and futuristic "appliances"...THE MARVEL OF THE AGES!!! Gene Autry made a name for himself, in this now very vintage 12-episode presentation, but was not however, his very first foray into the world of celluloid (which is still commonly believed). THE PHANTOM EMPIRE did however, make the future "first" KING of the COWBOYS, a big star. Mascot was not new to the serials biz either, as they had been making a name for themselves in this department for years already. They were also wizards when it came to the world of the very low budget B western.

It has also been reported in numerous unnamed video-film compendiums, that Autry only appeared in a single serial endeavor. This is NOT true. In his second film appearance (just prior to

receiving star billing for THE PHANTOM EMPIRE), Autry turned up, with future longtime western sidekick Smiley Burnette, in Ken Maynard's "MYSTERY MOUNTAIN" (1934). this was Maynard's only cliff-hanger though! In MYSTERY MOUNTAIN, Ken, Gene, and Smiley, join forces, to outwit a venom-spewing villain known as "The Rattler". This was also a Mascot product, lasting for 12 whole segments. Autry and Burnette, in fact, made their motion picture debut in a Ken Maynard B oater. "IN OLD SANTA FE" ('34) is considered by many, to be Maynard's most shining hour is a sound western, but it gives no screen billing for Autry or Burnette. Mascot Pictures strikes again! Producer/ Mascot head honcho Nat Levine (THE PHANTOM EMPIRE), after much urging on the part of both Autry and Burnette, finally backed down, and allowed the two men to show what they had, in terms of screen talent. And "that" they had plenty of! They also earned a whopping $175 each, per week! So it was IN OLD SANTA FE, that kicked off the long-running film career of "America's Favorite Cowboy"/"The Cowboy Idol Of The Air". The rest is pure and simple history!

CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN is proud to present in pix and in text, one of the most thrilling serial pictures of all time. You are sure to read about some of your personal cliff-hanging favorites! How about THE UNDERSEA KINGDOM, THE MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR SATAN, and THE GREEN HORNET, just for starters???(!) So sit back now, as we happily turn back the clock to 1935. The popcorn may not be as affordable (or as GOOD!) as it once was, but one thing is for certain..."You'll love the tasty tale!!!" Friends, it's now time to journey to:

THE PHANTOM EMPIRE

CHAPTER ONE:

THE SINGING COWBOY

Gene Autry, in white cowboy hat (playing himself), is not only radio's singing cowboy sensation, but co-owner of "RADIO RANCH", as well. RADIO RANCH, perfectly named, as it is the sight of daily afternoon "live' broadcasts, featuring Autry and his Radio Riders, performing heart-warming western tunes,

and putting on action-packed adventure plays. All is done with the benefit of not only the home-listeners glued to their radios, but with the welcome presence of the in-the-flesh public. Everyone is welcome to attend!

Young kids Frankie and Betsy (played by Frankie Darro and Betsy King Ross), reside at the RADIO RANCH, just like ol' Gene. They have formed a fun group, known as "THE JUNIOR THUNDER RIDERS", complete with flowing capes, and helmets of steel. But how in God's name did they come up with such an idea? Not long before, while riding their mighty loyal steeds in and around Thunder Valley, our pair, witnessed something truly uncanny. At first, there was the sound of thunder, a sound that rocked the countryside, And the, the startling vision of a large gathering of galloping horses. The horses were mounted with men, but what kind of men were they?? They wore strange "hats" upon their heads, and around their necks, were capes of some sort. The kids were petrified, and managed to get out of the legion's way...or perhaps might have been trampled to death! The charging men turned out to be an inspiration for the two youngsters, so they decided to form their own little own little happy band, and adopted the name of "THE JUNIOR THUNDER RIDERS".

Just now, soaring just about peaceful RADIO RANCH, is a certain airplane. It carries a very determined scientist and his band of cohorts, bound to seek out riches and whatnot. The bearded Professor Beetson (Frank Glendon), is sure that the ranch below is the sight of rich radium deposits...and possibly beyond that, secrets that have laid buried for thousands of years!!! But what to do(???)...RADIO RANCH is not devoid of life! The men land in a nearby filed, and are immediately welcomed by Autry and pals, and given shelter. Young Frankie has in the meantime, been getting strange readings with his "direction-finder"...which points to abnormal activity coming from underground.

Gene and the kids seek out the help of Professor Beetson, to possibly gain some answers. They show him a tiny idol, which Gene had found at the entrance to Thunder Valley. It is in the form of a man. Beetson is of no help (of course!), and after the trio leaves, plots to get rid of the crooning hero! Autry must broadcast at every afternoon at exactly 2 o'clock. If not, he will lose his contract, and RADIO RANCH, as well. With him out of the way for good, Beetson and party can really have a good look around the place! They must prevent Autry from another radio show!

While riding astride his steed "Champion", Autry is gunned from the

saddle, by one of Beetson's henchmen. Is our hero gone from this earth?! At the same time, a mysterious figure appears out of the thick undergrowth...what appears to be a human being, in strange looking garb. One of the badmen calls the being a "Muranian". Two men go off and try to follow this "Muranian", and are soon met by him, or "it"...and it has a weapon of some odd design! It quickly fires some sort of deadly dart at one of the men, but the other fires a deadly bullet at it, knocking it off its feet. The Beetson survivor races to clue in the evil professor on his shocking find, but when they return, the stranger's body is nowhere to be found. They do find however, a fascinating looking helmet-device, with a fresh bullet-hole through its cranium, provided by the kill-hungry henchman.

The helmet appears to contain some kind of breathing-apparatus, which was destroyed by the lead projectile! The being must be a Muranian, and the helmet proves that he comes from somewhere underground! But where is this being now??? 20,000 feet below the surface lies the answer!!! The Muranian man has been rescued, and he still survives. The man is a soldier and loyal resident or 'THE SCIENTIFIC CITY of MURANIA", which is ruled with an iron fist by the hateful Queen Tika (Dorothy Christy). The Queen hates the earthpeople with an undying vengeance, and through the marvels of Muranian science, instructs her army to seal off the entrance to Thunder Valley...known by The Muranians, as "THE GARDEN OF LIFE" (the Queen's transmitting device is called a "television"!). No other terran human will be allowed to discover the secret passageway to Murania! The city must be "protected", at all costs! Murania is a society populated by people who live the serene way of life. They claim not to worship violent acts, and according to Queen Tika, have superior intellect. It is also home to many scientific wonders - - - power-driven machinations, and squads of "robotmen", with the strength of many!

With the aid of THE JUNIOR THUNDER RIDERS (headed by young Frankie and Betsy), Gene is found and rescued, and he seems to be devoid of any injuries. Tika decides to order the slaying of the singing cowboy, as she watches through her secret "windows". Very soon, hordes of "real" Thunder Riders are galloping after our three heroes, closing in for the kill. Gene and the kids stop for a moment, and with the help of a handy lasso, try to hide from the pouncing army of Muranians. The rope is tied to a tree, and the three scared instruments of prey, dangle over the side of a steep cliff. All seems to be well, as the merciless riders storm past them. But wait...(!) the many horses hooves have frayed the rope! In mere seconds, our trio is plummeting fast for the rocks below!!! Is this the end of Gene Autry, Frankie and Betsy...and perhaps RADIO RANCH??? Be sure to stay tuned!!! MORE CHILLS AND THRILLS TO COME in CHAPTER TWO: THE THUNDER RIDERS in CoF 2000 Yearbook!

BARBARA STEELE: QUEEN OF HORROR

by Alan Warren

The pages of cinema history are filled with directors in love with actresses; their films become love-poems addressed to the object of their devotion. One thinks of Von Sternberg and Dietrich; of Antonioni and Monica Vitti; of Godard and Anna Karina. Something of the sort happened with Barbara Steele in the 1960s: her directors alternately deified her, fantasized her, idealized her and defied her - - sometimes all in the same film.

Steele was one of the more agreeable developments of the internationalization of the horror film in the 1960s. Until then no actress had ever had horror vehicles constructed to fit her peculiar personality. Horror heroines had been plentiful - - Valerie Hobson, Fay Wray and Evelyn Ankers among them - - but they had been on the side of the angels, the counterparts of David Manners or Lester Matthews. There had never been a female equivalent of Karloff, Lugosi or Chaney - - only Gloria Holden in DRACULA'S DAUGHTER, or the long-forgotten Mary Morris of DOUBLE DOOR, had the temerity to embody evil, and those were one-shot performances, never repeated. Barbara Steele was different: terror mixed with eroticism gave her a certain necrophiliac attraction as powerful as it was unsettling. Her career was certainly not spectacular, but she enlivened a number of otherwise routine Italian pot-boilers just as Karloff had enlivened his starring vehicles in the the 1930s and early 1940s. She was not a great actress; although she handled her roles competently she was seldom, if ever, outstanding. (It's difficult to judge her actual acting ability, since she was routinely, and inadequately, dubbed.) It was, rather, her exotic looks that typed her within the horror genre. Film historian Mark Miller noted that horror fans find Steele "morbidly fascinating" because of "her direct link of sex to death."

She was born December 29, 1937 in Trenton-Wirrall, England. (Some sources list the date as December 19, 1938, the place as Birkenhead, Cheshire, England.) She left home at 16 to live and study in Paris; her acting debut came on the London stage in a comedy with Robert Morley. A talent agent saw her in BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE, and signed her to a long-term contract with J. Arthur Rank. Her first picture for Rank, a comedy called BACHELOR OF HEARTS (1958) was hardly an ideal showcase; her next film, OPERATION SCOTLAND YARD (1959) fated little better. Rank was not taking advantage of Barbara's unique screen personality, and her films were tatty and mediocre: UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS, THE 39 STEPS (both 1959), and YOUR MONEY OR YOUR WIFE (1960).

Following this lot, Rank sold her contract to 20th Century Fox, and Barbara went to Hollywood for two years, during which she made no films. Her American debut was to be Don Siegel's western, FLAMING STAR (1960), starring Elvis Presley. (Casting this exotic European beauty in a western is a typical example of the Hollywood mentality. Ironically, they had done the same with Louise Brooks, placing the star of PANDORA'S BOX in a John Wayne western, OVERLAND STAGE RAIDERS.) Don Siegel didn't want Steele: he felt that she couldn't act and would tower over Elvis. They did a test shot of her with a golden wig. Siegel noted that "Miss Steele, in her blonde wig and slippers, was very pleasant. I liked her personally, but her woeful lack of experience and strange Western (actually Birmingham) accent, plus her height, proved her undoing." He invited her to his trailer, where he politely dismissed her, explaining that she was miscast; Steele seemed relieved saying, "I'm happy I'm off the picture." She was replaced by Barbara Eden, who was a least shorter than Elvis. (This at any rate was Siegel's version. Barbara's own recollection was that she was reduced to tears by Siegel's bullying. Fed up with Hollywood's attempts to mold her into a conventional leading lady, she went back to her dressing room, called her agent, and then, without a word to anyone, took the next plane back to Europe. It was days before anyone knew she was gone.)

Recalling this frustrating period later, Barbara recalled: "My contract with Fox was dreadful. Rank, with whom I was under contract, didn't know very well how to use me. Then, they sold my contract to Fox. In the USA they wanted to change me completely. I was too big. I should be a brunette or a blonde. And then, life is so artificial. I arrived without much but left with nothing. I was completely demoralized."

Back in Europe, Barbara relocated in

Italy. Providentially, Mario Bava, the brilliant cinematographer who had worked on Riccardo Freda's films, was directing his first film, LA MASCHERA DE DEMONIO (THE MASK OF THE DEMON), based on Gogol's short story "The Viji", and selected Barbara to play the dual roles of Asa and Katia. Steele said later that Bava "had seen one of my films. I don't know which. It must have been an English film, I think. In any case, it was after BLACK SUNDAY that I was classified as a witch or vampire or whatever you wish."

BLACK SUNDAY, as the film was known in the U.S., opens with the witch Asa (Barbara) being put to death by having the mask of Satan, lined inside with sharp spikes, pounded onto her face. Two centuries later, two medical men encounter Princess Katia (Steele again), the witch's great-granddaughter, who is her exact double. On the day decreed as Black Sunday the witch comes back to life. She has become a vampire; she commands her former lover Javuto to rise from his grave, and the two embark on a reign of terror. The hero, Dr. Gorobec (John Richardson), has fallen in love with Katia; unbeknownst to him, Asa has changed forms with her, and he nearly slays Katia by mistake. Fortunately, the villagers arrive and burn the witch.

The film unreels with the unrelenting inexorability of a nightmare; its cinematography, dark and atmospheric to the nth degree, recalls Murnau. Its mood falters only in the final quarter, when Bava relies too heavily on shock cuts and scurries to tie up plot complications. For American audiences, accustomed to the more genteel variety of horror film, BLACK SUNDAY was a revelation: its emphasis on facial disfigurement and the more visceral forms of horror provided Americans with their first exposure to the Continental tradition, with its roots in the French grand guignol and its accent on mutilation and torture.

BLACK SUNDAY remains Bava's masterpiece and the film with which Barbara Steele is most readily identified. It was also a suitable showcase for her and the remarkable duality of her screen persona. As Danny Peary noted in his book CULT FILMS, "Steele's double role as the virginal Katia and the sexual witch, whose body is marked by the stigmata of unholy penetrations, suggestively presents the only two options allowed for women in such religious imagery: madonna or whore."

ONCE EVERY 100 YEARS...
THE UNDEAD DEMONS OF HELL TERRORIZE THE WORLD IN AN ORGY OF STARK HORROR!
BLACK SUNDAY
PLEASE NOTE
BARBARA STEELE · JOHN RICHARDS

The film was enormously successful in America, where it was released by American-International in 1961. (It was not shown in England until 1969, under the title REVENGE OF THE VAMPIRE.) Its success led AIP to offer Barbara the female lead in THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM (1961), their follow-up to the successful HOUSE OF USHER (1960). While AIP denied it had any intention of doing an Edgar Allan Poe series, the wonder is that it hadn't been done before. Although USHER had been reasonably faithful to Poe's story, this time scenarist Richard Matheson was obliged to contrive an elaborate plot leading up to the film's raison d'être, the massive, overhanging pendulum. Although the film adhered to the formula established by USHER, the results were more palatable than might have been expected; Daniel Haller's sets and Floyd Crosy's widescreen cinematography helped disguise the still-straitened budget. Vincent Price gave an over-broad performance, just the opposite of his underplayed Roderick Usher, and John Kerr was amateurish, making no secret of his distaste for the film (the Poe pictures routinely suffered from inadequate acting, usually from the supporting players), but Barbara was seen to good advantage as

Price's wife, Elizabeth Medina. Roger Corman directed,and the film was even more successful than USHER, earning about two million dollars domestically, ensuring the Poe cycle that AIP seemed curiously reluctant to embrace.

While in Hollywood, Barbara appeared in an episode of ADVENTURES IN PARADISE, entitled "Daughter of Illusion" (telecast December 12, 1960), then in a segment of ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS, "Beta Delta Gamma" (telecast November 14, 1961). The Hitchcock story concerned some college students who play a macabre prank on a hard-drinking fraternity student. They convince him he has killed another student during an alcoholic binge; not knowing the student is alive, he buries the body on the beach, then is unable to remember where. Barbara had little to do as one of the students.

Although it may not have been apparent at the time, Barbara's career was at a crossroads. She might have given up horror films, as Barbara Shelley was later to do, for fear of being typecast. Instead, she began appearing in the Italian films that would mark the zenith of her horror film stardom. Although none of them matches the quality of BLACK SUNDAY, some are revered by the cognoscenti for their tongue-in-cheek qualities and atmosphere.

The best of these is probably L'ORRIBILE SEGRETO DEL DR. HICHCOCK (1962), also known as THE HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK, RAPTUS, and THE TERROR OF DR. HICHCOCK, directed by Riccardo Freda (his name Anglicized to Robert Hampton). Dr. Hichcock (Robert Flemyng), a necrophiliac, gives his wife Margaretha an anesthesia in order to give her a deathlike appearance during their sex games. One night he gives her an overdose and Margaretha dies. Grief-stricken, Dr. Hichcock leaves London. Twelve years later, he returns to his house with his second wife Cynthia (Steele). While he is away at the hospital and Cynthia is alone in the house strange events occur; Margaretha seems to have returned from the dead. Shocks multiply until Dr. Hichcock sees Margaretha, alive but withered and insane from having been buried alive; now determined to restore her youth and beauty, Dr. Hichcock attempts to poison Cynthia so they can extract her blood. The young hero Dr. Curt Lang (Silvano Tranquili) arrives in time to save Cynthia. The house goes up in flames, killing Hichcock and Margaretha, but Curt and Cynthia escape.

THE HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK, despite the intentional misspelling, is intended as a homage to Alfred, with references to REBECCA, SUSPICION, and UNDER CAPRICORN. (Its finale recalls PSYCHO.) It differs from Barbara's other vehicles in several respects. For one thing, Freda's resplendent color cinematography replaces the usual monochrome, and the director shows a painter's eye in his selection of decor and imagery: a funeral in the rain; Cynthia at the window staring out into the storm, her enormous eyes limpid pools of black; a servant holding a glowing lamp in the swirling mist; Cynthia entombed in a glass-encased coffin, her breath fogging the glass. Another difference concerns Barbara's role: although Cynthia is the film's central character, she is passive, and observer rather than malefactor. As Carlos Clarens noted in AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE HORROR FILM: "In spite of Freda's avowed preference for the genre, his horror movies are marked by a denial of the fantastic - - they are in substance melodramas of jealousy and machinations, usually directed against the sanity, or the life, of the heroine. Freda's center is invariably the woman, either as victim or victimizer, and logically his work is subtle, unathletic, and velvet soft. The stories of both THE HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK and THE GHOST are slices of Krafft-Ebing garnished with succulent Technicolor, the work of (cinematographer) Raffaele Masciocchi alias Donald Green."

DR. HICHCOCK was hampered, and portions of its plot left unclear, when twelve minutes were removed for its American release, though the videotape currently available from Sinister Cinema seems reasonably complete. The American excisions mainly involve hints of necrophilia. (Dr. Hichcock is seen knocking out a gravedigger at the beginning of the film - - an otherwise inexplicable action.)

BENEATH THE SHAPELY BREAST & VELVET SKIN,
A RICH DARK SATISFYING BLOOD!
His secret was a coffin named DESIRE!
THE HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK
BARBARA STEELE · ROBERT FLEMYNG
with MONTGOMERY GLENN · TERESA FITZGERALD · HARRIET WHITE
TECHNICOLOR

The film's success spawned an immediate, though somewhat less frenetic, follow-up, LO SPETTRO (1963), also known as THE GHOST and THE SPECTRE, again directed by Freda. This time Barbara starred as Margareta, who apparently kills her husband, Dr. Hichcock (Elio Jotta), with the assistance of her lover (Peter Baldwin). But is Hichcock really dead? Margareta sees his apparent ghost behind a curtain. Soon she begins to have doubts about her lover, which leads to a frenzied murder sequence obviously inspired by the shower scene in PSYCHO, though the plot itself owes a debt to LES DIABOLIQUES.

THE GHOST is an apposite companion piece to THE HORRIBLE DR. HICHCOCK. Masciocchi's camerawork again astounds with a variety of color effects, though Freda, by removing the supernatural element, has settled for mere melodrama. No matter. Again emphasizing decor and imagery, Freda creates a convincingly nightmarish milieu, despite the exigencies of a hasty shooting schedule. As Carlos Clarens notes, "RAPTUS and LO SPETTRO were shot in twelve days and rather than ephemeral, both pictures achieve a permanence of lovingly wrought miniatures, the handiwork of careless, but undoubtedly talented, minor master."

The two Dr. Hichcock films stand apart from the rest of Barbara's oeuvre. Unrelated by plot or character, they are instead variations on a theme. They are self-contained and form a distinctly minor but stylish respite from her increasingly formularized genre pieces: these feature Steele as the centerpiece of a melange of horrific effects, piled on haphazardly, and rely solely on Barbara herself to redeem them through sheer force of personality.

Barbara's other film that year was in a sense the apex of her career, certainly the finest film she every appeared in, and a tantalizing glimpse of roles she might have played had her career developed differently. Although several genre stars appeared in genuinely great films outside the genre - - Lugosi in NINOTCHKA, Chaney Jr. in OF MICE AND MEN, Carradine in STAGECOACH and THE GRAPES OF WRATH - - Barbara in a sense topped them all with her role as actress Gloria Morin in Federico Fellini's masterpiece 8½. Fellini was apparently untroubled by her genre connections, though he cut her long dance scene in a nightclub, reportedly because it too closely parodied a similar scene in Antonioni's L'ECLISSE. 8½ is routinely considered one of the dozen great films; a 1972 critics' poll conducted by SIGHT AND SOUND magazine voted it the fourth finest film of all time, just behind CITIZEN KANE, LA REGLE DU JEU and BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN. (Interestingly, Fellini was fascinated with Boris Karloff's face, and had asked him to appear in his next film. Karloff was honored by the invitation; unfortunately he died before shooting began, thus denying posterity a unique collaboration.)

Barbara's next film, LA DANZA MACABRA (1963), is known under several titles, including CASTLE OF BLOOD, CASTLE OF TERROR, THE LONG NIGHT OF TERROR, TOMBS OF HORROR and DANSE MACABRE. Although supposedly based on a Poe story (the nonexistent "Danse Macabre"), it may have taken its inspiration from his poem "The Haunted Palace". (It does feature Poe himself, somewhat irrelevantly, as a character.) The story relies on the hoary chestnut of the wager that a man cannot spend the night in a haunted house - - in this case Blackwood Castle. Young Alan Foster (George Riviere) accepts the challenge. Within the castle he meets Elizabeth Blackwood (Barbara) and falls in love with her. After a harrowing night witnessing the dead returning to life, he succeeds in leaving the castle, only to fall victim to a last-minute twist. Critics complained of the film's meandering storyline, several attributing it to Poe, claiming it was based on a story unpublished during the author's lifetime. The film had atmosphere and a few nicely macabre moments, notably the totally unforeseen twist ending; in addition, Barbara was photographed to advantage, and there were a few quietly erotic moments between her and Margaret Robsahn, playing her sister. It was directed by Antonio Margheriti, his name Anglicized to Anthony Dawson.

Margheriti also directed I LUNGHI CAPELLI DELLA MORTE (1964), released in America as THE LONG HAIR OF DEATH. Set in the 16th century, some of its imagery recalls BLACK SUNDAY. The plot involves the wife of Count Humboldt (Giuliano Raffaelli), who is burnt at the stake for a murder actually committed by the Count's son (Giorgio Ardisson). The Count then kills Helen (Steele), but she returns from the grave when a thunderbolt strikes her tomb. Her worm-eaten face, extensively publicized in stills, is enough to make the Count die of fright. Like CASTLE OF BLOOD, the film was atmospheric and had its share of frightening moments, but the basic sameness of the plots was becoming apparent.

It was around this time that critics began addressing love-letters to Barbara, notwithstanding the quality of her films. Particularly memorable was Raymond Durgnat's encomium: "In monochrome, her immense, green eyes photograph a liquid Italian-black. She is the only girl in films whose eyelids can snarl."

THE SHE BEAST (1965), Barbara's next film, occupies a special niche in the history of cinefantastique. It was directed by Michael Reeves, arguably the greatest British horror director since the advent of James Whale. Despite the brevity of his career (he died in 1969 at the age of 24, having completed three features), Reeves managed to work with three icons of horror cinema (Karloff, Price, and Steele) and produced one undisputed masterpiece, WITCHFINDER GENERAL (1968). Although THE SHE BEAST was Reeves' first film, it has flashes of brilliance, despite being hampered by its low budget - - around $70, 000, half of which Reeves put up himself. Despite the film's historical importance, it was an unpleasant experience for Barbara. She was contracted for four days' work; producer Paul Maslansky recalled that "we paid her five thousand dollars and worked her 22 hours straight, and she didn't talk to me for 15 years!"

VARDELLA, as the film was originally titled, was shot in 18 days outside Rome, and supposedly set in contemporary Transylvania, which accounts for much of the film's quirky humor. ("Do you know the Draculas, by any chance?" Barbara asks one of the locals.) Although Reeves' other two films are notable for their unrelieved grimness, THE SHE BEAST is laced with humorous touches, not all of them Reeves'. (A second unit, directed by Corman alumnus Charles Griffith, was used to film some obtrusive comedy relief, much to the film's detriment.) Even the film's British title was a joke: asked to come up with a salable title, Reeves said, tongue-in-cheek, "Why not call it REVENGE OF THE BLOOD BEAST?", and the title stuck.

THE SHE BEAST (also known as LA SORELLA DI SATANA of SATAN'S SISTER) opens with the witch Vardella being drowned in a small Transylvanian village. Two hundred years later newlyweds Philip (Ian Ogilvy) and Veronica (Barbara) visit the same village; when their car crashes the witch takes possession of Veronica. At the end Vardell is apparently exorcised, but Veronica warns, "I'll be back." (The ending was originally to have featured Philip and Veronica back in London in bed together. Just as he turns over there is the 400-year-old witch come back to life - - but Reeves didn't have the money to shoot it.) "It suddenly struck us as being a very silly movie, and maybe the best thing would be to cut our losses and run," Ian Ogilvy later recalled. "That's why you have all those jokes in it. Actually, the movie made a lot of money, in its own term."

Although THE SHE BEAST is the crudest of Reeves' three films, it adumbrates many of the themes and concerns that would receive more thoughtful expression in Reeves' masterpiece. One of the more spectacular bits of violence - - Philip slams a peeping tom up against a wall and the man slides down it, leaving a trail of blood - - is repeated in WITCHFINDER GENERAL.

At the time, THE SHE BEAST was received as just another Barbara Steele movie; now that it can be judged in its proper context within Reeves' oeuvre it takes on an importance greater than its

Ian Ogilvy rescues Barbara Steele from the menace of "The She Beast" in this scene from the terror-filled chiller in Eastmancolor and Scope, coming ..... to the ..... Theatre.

actual merits. Ivan Butler, reviewing it in THE HORROR FILM, called it "An Italian-made vampire film which achieves the rarely successful task of laughing at itself without altogether losing the sense of horror. Barbara Steele is, as usual, splendiferous, though in a comparatively small role."

This was followed by AMANTI D'OLTR E TOMBA, retitled NIGHTMARE CASTLE (1965). As in BLACK SUNDAY, Barbara plays a dual role: the dark-haired Muriel, who is discovered in flagrante delicto with her lover, and then tortured and killed by her husband; and her own half-sister, the blonde and innocent Jenny, who is gradually possessed by the ghost of Muriel. The film is yet another vehicle for Barbara, exploiting her madonna/whore personae, admittedly to much lesser effect. But the sheer repetition was beginning to exhaust all but the most fanatical Barbara Steele buffs. As Phil Hardy put in his ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HORROR MOVIES: "The film seems frozen in its fetishistic contemplation of Steele, an impression underlined by Ennio Morricone's repetitive score. It appears that directors unable to use Steele's uncanny beauty for the kind of horror films that are designed to churn up the viewer's relation to cinematic fantasies per se (L'ORRIBILE SEGRETO DEL DR. HICHCOCK, LA MASCHERA DEL DEMONIO) were simply overwhelmed by the force of her image, making their films disintegrate into superficial picture albums."

Barbara next appeared in CINQUE TOMBE PER UN MEDIUM (1965), also called FIVE GRAVES FOR A MEDIUM. Yet another period horror thriller, it cast Steele as yet another scheming villainess who conspires to murder her husband. He summons the dead to rise from their graves to avenge her murder. The creatures, plague victims, destroy the guilty parties but allow an innocent girl to escape. They are then destroyed by the purifying rain. The film was simply too similar to Steele's other vehicles to merit any distinction. It was not released in the U.S. until 1968 under the title TERROR-CREATURES FROM THE GRAVE.

Around this time, commenting on the differences between American and European filmmaking, Barbara was quoted as saying: "In America, one shoots in a studio, and it's not at all impressive. In Italy, the shooting was done in authentic manors, in real crypts ... and then, I was, no doubt, a bit superstitious. Each time when I had to lie down in a tomb, I said to myself, 'This time, Barbara, it's the very last.' And then ... I would like horror films very much if they had been made differently. I would like to make a very calm horror film. It's ridiculous. It's always necessary to come out of a tomb, very shriveled, convulsing. I hate that. I find, on the contrary, that it's necessary to make horror films ver cool - - like LES YEUX SANS VISAGE." At a later point she said: "There's always too much screaming, too much noise in routine horror films, and far too little sex. They should make a real super, bang-up erotic horror film. But, of course, they confuse vulgarity with eroticism." She added that she would "do a totally erotic love scene - - even, maybe, make love with the actor - - if that was right for the script and if the film was not merely promoting sex."

In 1965 she appeared in an episode of the cult TV series SECRET AGENT, entitled "The Man on the Beach". Unfortunately her character drops out of the story after the first twenty minutes.

Barbara's next film, THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS, was to have begun shooting in 1965 under the direction of cult figure Nicholas Ray and based on a screenplay by Dylan Thomas. Steele was set to co-star with Laurence Harvey and Geraldine Chaplin. The film, based on the legend of Burke and Hare, was abandoned just days before the starting date for principal photography when financing fell through. (It was finally made 21 years later under the direction of Freddie Francis and starred Timothy Dalton.)

Following this, Barbara stepped outside the horror genre, as she had done occasionally in the past, to do YOUNG TORLESS (1966) an adaptation of the novel by Robert Musil, author of the seminal novel THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES. Steele portrayed Bozena, a local temptress, who seduces TORLESS, a student at a boarding school. Like 8½, the film was critically acclaimed, but did not lead to further "straight parts for Barbara.

The last of Steele's horror vehicles was UN ANGELO PER SATANA (1966), translated as AN ANGEL FOR SATAN. The plot concerned a 200 year-old statue that is brought up from a lake sometime in the 19th century. The statue resembles Harriet (Barbara), who is possessed by the

spirit of Belinda, represented by the statue. The Count of Montebruno (Claudio Gora) hypnotizes Harriet, causing her to take on Jekyll and Hyde characteristics, causing a wave of suicides and murder. The film, directed by Camillo Mastrocinque, caused little stir; it was simply too similar to Steele's other films, right down to the period setting and her playing (in essence) a dual role. Mastrocinque did a better job directing TERROR IN THE CRYPT (1963), an adaptation of LeFanu's CARMILLA, starring Christopher Lee.

After a pair of undistinguished programmers (REVENGE OF THE MERCENARIES [1967] and HANDICAP [1968]), Barbara returned to the horror genre - - in an H.P. Lovecraft adaptation, no less - - but the results were disastrous. Repeatedly announced during the 1960s, SCARLET FRIDAY - - an adaptation of Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror" - - was to star Boris Karloff and Christopher Lee under the direction of Mario Bava. Unfortunately, this project never came to fruition. (Bava might have been the perfect director for Lovecraft; instead, "The Dunwich Horror" was given to AIP's resident Lovecraft "specialist" Daniel Haller, who botched it just as he had "The Colour Out of Space", released as DIE, MONSTER, DIE!) Instead, "The Dreams in the Witch-House" was selected as the fifth Lovecraft adaptation, starring Karloff, Lee, Steele and Michael Gough. Seemingly, no film with that cast could be unmitigated stiff, but THE CRIMSON CULT (also known as THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR) is just that. An absurd melange of witchcraft and devil cultism, it featured Steele (painted green!) with scarlet lips and a ludicrous golden ram headpiece. Lacking even camp value, the film was released in 1970, a year after Karloff's death (and billed as "His Last Evil Role!"), and quickly forgotten. It was directed by British veteran Vernon Sewell (THE GHOST SHIP [1952], HOUSE OF MYSTERY [1961] and BURKE AND HARE [1971]). Curiously, the film received this accolade from David Pirie in A HERITAGE OF HORROR: "Though Lovecraft was not finally credited, it remains the closest that anyone has got to capturing the feeling of his work on the screen." Joe Dante's reaction in CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN #17

was more typical: "While several more Karloff films still await release, this was one of his last, and an excruciatingly bad, vapid one it is."

Following THE CRIMSON CULT, Barbara was absent from horror films for some time. In 1969 she appeared in a TV movie, HONEYMOON WITH A STRANGER, with Janet Leigh and Rossano Brazzi, a thriller with DIABOLIQUE- like overtones. In 1971 she made a brief and little-noted return to the genre in an episode of TV's NIGHT GALLERY entitled "The Sins of the Fathers", dealing with the ancient practice of sin-eating. In 1974 she appeared as a sadistic warden in CAGED HEAT!, a prison melodrama with radical feminist slant, the first feature film directed by Jonathan Demme (THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS), but this failed to jump-start her moribund film career.

Her films now began to parallel those of the 1960s, with one major difference: she was now a supporting actress rather than the star. In 1976 she appeared in David Croneberg's THEY CAME FROM WITHIN: in one scene she is bathing when one of the parasites of the title emerges from the drain and enters her. Afterwards she is transformed into a sex maniac. (The film was also known as SHIVERS.) In 1977 she had a small, "straight" role in the well-received I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN. The following year, Barbara worked for French director Louis Malle in PRETTY BABY, the film that established Brooke Shields. Although it was a supporting role it affirmed Barbara's penchant for working with leading continental directors. From there it was a step down to PIRANHA (1978), an exploitation item from former CoF writer Joe Dante. The film had an impressive supporting cast, including Kevin McCarthy, Keenan Wynn, Dick Miller, and another CoF contributor, the tragic Barry Brown (who committed suicide that same year, aged 25). SILENT SCREAM (1980) was yet another exploitation item in which Barbara appeared as Yvonne de Carlo's insane daughter.

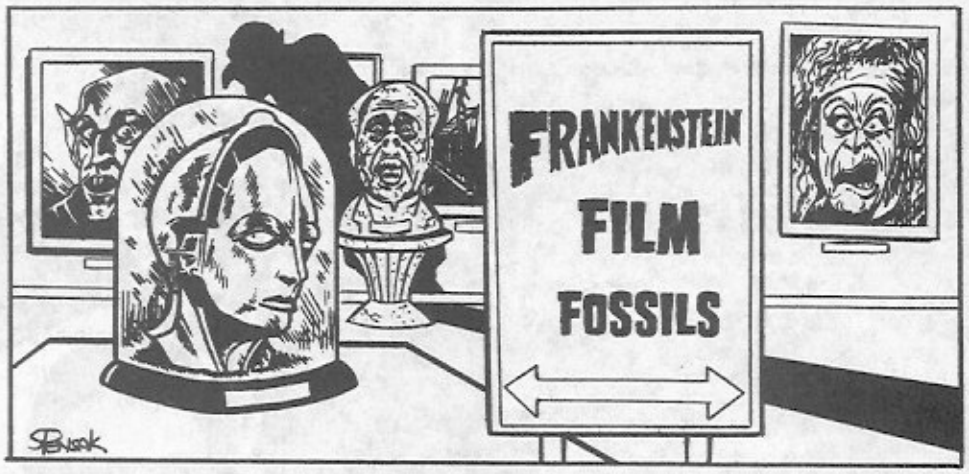
Rather than continuing this descent into exploitation, Barbara temporarily left acting to step behind the cameras. She was associate producer of the TV miniseries THE WINDS OF WAR (1983), and won an Emmy as producer of the follow-up, WAR AND REMEMBRANCE (1988), appearing in small parts in both. She returned to acting in the new DARK SHADOWS in 1991 as Dr. Julia Hoffman (the role originally played by Grayson Hall), but this updating of the classic horror soap opera lasted only a few months. In 1996 Barbara appeared in a supporting role in the most recent version of THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, directed by John Frankenheimer. It would have been interesting to see her together with Marlon Brando (who played Dr. Moreau), but unfortunately her entire role was deleted.

For the time being Barbara seems content to remain behind the scenes. Time appears to have mellowed her attitude toward her image as the "queen of horror". Years before, she expressed distaste and even disapproval of the genre (she was quoted as saying: "The thing is, the horrors are the only films one hears about, which is just a frigging drag. I always used to think they'd end up only in Sicily. It's not so. They end up at the Odeon while all the things you did for love and nothing end up in late-night showings at the Tokyo Film Festival!") Now, as quoted on the set of DARK SHADOWS, she is far more sanguine about her status as horror icon: "It used to disturb me because I felt it had some sort of negative undertone. But now I find it quite ironical; it amuses me. I know it doesn't disturb me anymore."

BARBARA STEELE'S FILMS

1. Bachelor of Hearts, 1958 as Fiona
2. Operation of Scotland Yard, 1959
3. Sapphire, 1959
4. Upstairs and Downstairs, 1959 as Mary
5. The 39 Steps, 1959
6. Your Money or Your Wife, 1960 as Juliet Frost
7. Black Sunday, 1960 as Katia/Princess Asa
8. Pit and the Pendulum, 1961 as Elizabeth Medina
9. L'Orribile Segreto del Dr. Hichcock (Horrible Dr. Hichcock), 1962 as Cynthia Hichcock
10. L'Oeil du Monocle (The Monocle), 1962
11. Un Tentative Sentimentale (A sentimental Attempt), 1963
12. Los Spettro (The Ghost), 1963 as Margareta
13. Le Ore dell'a more (The Hours of Love), 1963 as Leila
14. Les Baisers, 1963
15. 8½, 1963 as Gloria Morin
16. La Danza Macara (Castle of Blood), 1963 as Elizabeth Blackwood
17. I Capitano di Ferro, 1963
18. I Maniaci (The Maniacs), 1964
19. I Lunghi capelli della morte (The Long Hair of Death), 1964 as Helen
20. Amore Facile (Easy Love), 1964
21. Le Voci biance (White Voices), 1964
22. Tre per una repina (The Road to Violence), 1964
23. Amanti d'oltre tomba (Nightmare Castle), 1965 as Jenny/Muriel
24. Once Upon a Tractor (telefeature), 1965
25. I Soldi, 1965
26. La Sorella di Satana (The She Beast), 1965 as Veronica
27. Cinque tombe per un medium (Terror-Creatures from the Grave), 1966 as Cleo Hauff
28. Un Angelo per Satana (An Angel for Satan), 1966 as Harriet
29. L'Armata Brancaleone, 1966 as Teodora
30. For Love and Gold, 1966
31. Der Junge Torless (Young Torless), 1966 as Bozena
32. Revenge of the Mercenaries, 1967
33. Handicap, 1968
34. The Crimson Cult, 1968 as Lavinia Morley
35. Honeymoon with a Stranger (telefeature), 1969 as Carla
36. Stop the World...I Want to Get Off, 1970
37. Caged Heat, 1974 as Superintendent McQueen
38. They Came from Within (Shivers), 1976 as Betts
39. I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, 1977 as Idat
40. Pretty Baby, 1978 as Josephine
41. Cle su la porte, 1978
42. Piranha, 1978 as Dr. Mengers
43. Silent Scream, 1980 as Victoria Engels
44. The Winds of War (telefeature), 1983 as Mrs. Stoller
45. War and Remembrance (telefeature), 1989 as Elsa MacMahon
46. Adam Hart i Sahara, 1990 as Portrait of Alicia
47. Dark Shadows (television), 1991 as Dr. Julia Hoffman/Countess Natalie
48. Tiet oben (Deep Above), 1994
49. The Island of Dr. Moreau (role deleted), 1996

SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN



While not a "lost" film, Benjamin Christensen's SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN (1929) has been an elusive one over the years. Even as thorough an historian as Carlos Clarens was unable to view a copy for his seminal "Illustrated History of the Horror Film" (1967). In 1995 Turner Classic Movies scheduled a telecast of the film but it never played. Supposedly, the print did not meet TCM's quality standards. Or maybe, for once, someone at TCM actually took a look at the film and discovered the intertitles were not in English! A reasonably good copy with Italian titles did air on Italian TV and video versions have been making the rounds ever since. The synchronized sound effects/music discs for the film have not surfaced so the Italian version lifted RJ Miller's score for the 1920 LAST OF THE MOHICANS (it works remarkably well, certainly much better than the stop and start chamber music so often tacked on to silent films). SEVEN FOOTPRINTS has since been shown at UCLA and recently at MOMA for a Christensen retrospective. Prior to all this most horror fans knew the film only through a few odd stills and the famous story that A. Merritt, author of the book the film was based on, wept when he saw what Hollywood had done to his thriller.

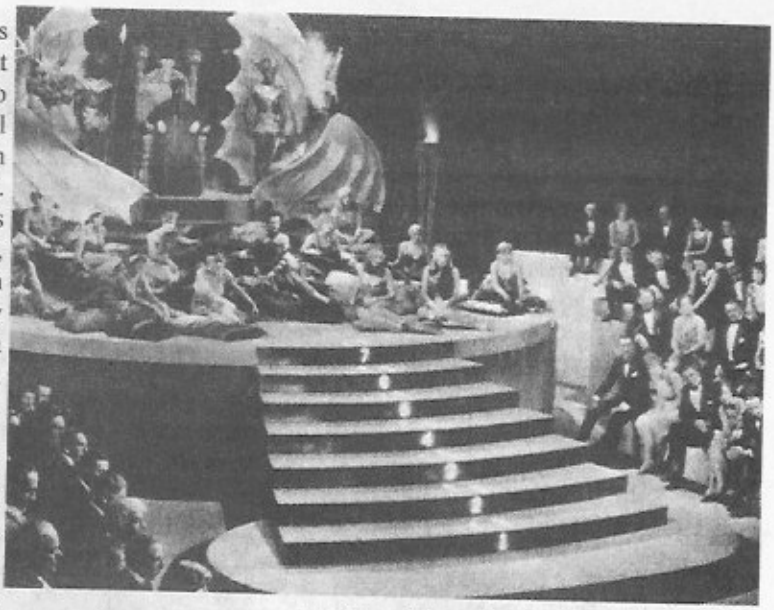
"Seven Footprints to Satan" was a departure into Sax Rohmer territory for an author who specialized in pulp sci fi and fantasy. Merritt's Satan is a master criminal not unlike Fu Manchu or Dr. Mabuse. Formidable in stature and intellect, Satan oversees a worldwide empire of crime and is so hypnotic that his awed underlings half believe his claim to be not just *a* devil but *the* devil. Satan delights in kidnapping criminals and adventurers and anyone else who might be useful in his schemes and subjecting them to the 7 Footprints, a bizarre game of chance held in Satan's throneroom. Winners obtain their freedom but losers face the possibility of death in one of the torture chambers in Satan's dungeons or, the more likely fate, a period of servitude to Satan. Lowest on the rungs of Satan's minions are the keft drinkers, addicts to a powerful hallucinogen that only Satan can provide. In a horrifying scene the hero, James Kirkham, witnesses a macabre ceremony in which the keft drinkers must worship Satan as their god in exchange for doses of the drug. Kirkham falls in love with Eve, another reluctant draftee into Satan's legions, and they plot to escape their sadistic master's seemingly all powerful grasp. Eventually, they discover that the 7 Footprints are rigged in Satan's favor. They demonstrate this before an assembled multitude of Satan's followers. A riot ensues and Satan, exposed as just another crooked gambler, is blinded by a grenade.Clutching a precious statuette, the man who would be Lucifer perishes in the conflagration that destroys his palace.

All of which would have made for a lively thriller. The Germans would have turned Satan's lair into an Expressionist nightmare while the French would have had fun with the serial like capers so reminiscent of LES VAMPIRES. Unfortunately, First National saw the story as little more than fodder for the second of a trio of low budget haunted house comedies all with the same director (Christensen), writer ("Richard Bee', a pseudonym for Christensen) and star (Thelma Todd). The films may well have been designed primarily to exploit the growing use of sound, something new for the thriller genre. In reviewing the first of

the three, THE HAUNTED HOUSE (1928), the "NY Times" critic noted the effectiveness of the "variety of sounds, the dominating effects being booming thunder and howling wind". Christensen spent three years making the unique WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES. I wonder what he thought of turning out three features in barely six months!

The films begins as millionaire Jim Kirkham is preparing to go on safari to Africa. Since Jim is played by Creighton Hale, audiences of 1929 knew not to expect a Doug Fairbanks adventure or even a Harold Lloyd romp. Hale, whose unfunny milquetoast antics brought Griffith's WAY DOWN EAST way down plays musch the same role he did in CAT AND THE CANARY (1927). Jim is visited by his Uncle Joe (De Witt Jennings) who chides him for spending his inheritance on such nonsense and for postponing his marriage to Eve, who arrives shortly thereafter. Eve is portrayed by Thelma Todd, the great comedienne better remembered for her 3 reelers than her feature films. Here she is merely decorative. Make that *very* decorative in her low cut evening wear. (In fact, most of the ladies are dressed suggestively, perhaps the closest Christensen was able to approximate the nudity of WITCHCRAFT for an American film). Eve is worried that there may be an attempt to steal an invaluable emerald that her father is going to display at a party at their house that evening. She is very suspicious of one of the invited guests, Professor von Viede, and wants Jim to be there.

At the party Jim quickly pegs von Viede (Kalla Pasha) as a fraud but just as he confronts him an elegantly dressed dowager-who would be played by Margaret Dumont if this was a Marx Brothers movie-comes down the steps, *winks* and begins firing a pistol. Someone else also starts shooting. In fact the characters in this film fire guns into the air more frequently than rotgutted cowboys in a saloon, presumably to keep the sound effects department busy (much like throwing objects at the audience during the 3-D craze). The partygoers flee and Eve's father tells Jim and Eve to take the car and go to the police as the phone lines have been cut. However, Eve's chauffeur takes them not to the police but to a mysterious mansion (never glimpsed from the outside).



The couple is forced at gunpoint to go inside and then all Hellzapoppin breaks loose. Ominous shadows abound, screaming women are chased by thugs with guns, a crazy old man whispers in Jim's ear and then pretends to pull it off, and a bearded dwarf (Angelo Rossito) appears from behind a secret panel to utter warnings. Jim and Eve are made to go upstairs (they get there via a clever vertical wipe, a device Christensen uses twice more) but the scene is no less chaotic. An apeman spies on them and they are visited by a housekeeper straight out of Charles Addams. A terrified woman rushes in screaming that Satan has sentenced her to be whipped. She is dragged out and in the next shot we see her, presumably naked, getting getting tied to a pillar. We see a gorilla's paws help fasten her legs. The dwarf pops out from behind another panel to warn Jim and Eve that Satan's gorilla has escaped. The gorilla promptly turns up in the room, unmakes a bed and then disappears behind a curtain! A transom opens to reveal a skeletal prisoner who begs for help before his cage slams shut. Professor Moriarity (William V. Mong) who looks like a bespectacled wolfman, enters and tells Jim to look in his pocket. Jim discovers the emerald there but before he can figure out how it got there, an imperious Oriental (Sojin), decked out in Arabian nights garb, comes in and takes the emerald away. An exasperated Jim asks his captors how long they are going to be held. "An hour...a month...a year...or forever...as long as Satan wills.." is the ominous reply.

After more bizarre encounters Jim discovers that Satan is the leader of a cult of criminals and they apparently have designs on Jim's fortune. The gang includes the bogus professor, the pistol packing matron and even Jim's own valet. Brought before what looks like a board meeting of the cult, Jim is asked to sign a blank piece of paper. When he balks, Satan's mistress (Laska Winters), who's garbed as a combination Dragon Lady/ dominatrice, summons the Spider. In one of the film's few creepy scenes that is played straight, a torture chamber door opens and a sinister creature on crutches, glimpsed only in shadows before, enters and threatens Eve. The Spider, looking a bit like a more grotesque Lon Chaney from Christensen's MOCKERY, is played by an uncharacteristically restrained Sheldon Lewis whose close-ups skillfully suggest diabolical depravity. Jim quickly changes his mind about signing.

Jim and Eve are locked up but escape with the dwarf's help. From the top of the stairs they observe a dance in progress in which the male dancers are garbed in robes and masks. Quicker than you can say "Eyes Wide Shut!" Jim has obtained a robe and mask and tries to crash the party with Eve in an effort to get to the front door. However, the couple ends up on the wrong floor and finds themselves in the midst of a different sort of revel where the participants do not have masks and clearly have more than dancing on their minds. The orgy actually looks no more risqué than a slightly out of hand New Year's Even party but, given censorship, it was probably the best Christensen could do. Just as Eve is being manhandled by the cultists, Satan himself enters (The revelers politely applaud). Christensen does not show Satan in a close-up perhaps because Satan, who's dressed just like the dancers in the earlier scene, scarcely seems worthy of his build-up and looks no more impressive than your typical masked

serial villain Satan decides to pick his consorts for the evening and one of his choices is Eve. Facing a fate worse than death for the third time that evening Eve is saved when a disaffected cultist fires his pistol into the air (Big surprise). The orgiast scatter and Jim and Eve are separated.

Professor Moriarty, who has been trying to help Jim all along, appears again and they go in search of Eve. They find themselves in the Spider's room where they are attacked by the Spider and the gorilla. The dwarf appears from behind a bookcase and shoots the gorilla. Eve is rescued from a coffin but then she, Jim and the hairy professor are overcome by the other cultists and dragged into Satan's throneroom. (The throneroom set, with its harem girls and Nubian attendants, seems better suited for Maria Montez than an arch fiend.) On an elaborate stairway are seven sets of glowing footprints leading to Satan seated on his throne. Jim is told he must choose four of them to step into. A screen behind him registers a "-" if the step is Satan's and a "+" if it is not. If Jim picks all four steps that belong to Satan he will be killed immediately. As an assembly of the cultists hurl insults at him, Jim nervously ascends the stairs. The first three footprints he steps into belong to Satan but his fourth choice is a good one. His life is spared but he must serve Satan for three years. And then.....everyone breaks for lunch. A puzzled Jim follows the crowd into an adjoining refractory that looks like a studio commissary. Is this a surreal anticipation of the climax of BLAZING SADDLES? No. It turns out that the whole evening was a charade staged by Uncle Joe to give Jim so much excitement that he'd forget all about Africa. Everyone was in on the gag and Uncle Joe, the obvious forerunner to Allen Funt, himself played Satan. Toasted by the characters who just finished tormenting him, Jim sheepishly agrees to settle down with Eve and enjoy his millions right at home...at least for three years. It's a ridiculous and illogical ending but it probably sent many a moviegoer home chuckling. Except for Abraham Merritt.

Trying to make any sense of the various incidents in the film is a bit like constructing a scenario for a dark funhouse ride where your lurching car whisks you from witch to clown to monster and around again before leaving you blinking back in the sunlight. It's unlikely that even the most naive audience would take the events of the film at face value, especially as the actors often seem on the verge of smirking (appropriately enough as they are, after all, supposedly just pretending to be fiends). Christensen's use of light and shadow, while effective, seem less masterful than Paul Leni's in comparable films. Perhaps the hurried schedule and modest budget precluded more sophisticated visual touches. More often than not Christensen seems content to row his freakshow in front of the camera at ramming speed, rarely giving his audience a chance to reach for their popcorn before throwing another oddity at them. The nonstop lunacy is great fun and the pace must have seemed even more frenetic with sound effects.

Were Christensen and co. trying to satirize the popular thriller/comedy genre by taking its elements to absurd extremes? If so, they were late. The haunted house film had already started drifting toward outright farce and away from any real scares. In THE THIRTEENTH HOUR (1927), a film in which a dog is the hero, there's a scene where four detectives, slowly making their way down a spooky corridor, are *each* given the clutching hand treatment and pulled into a secret panel. By 1929 there was very little serious left to spoof.

Possibly, Christensen is mocking the very idea of horror as entertainment, of adults finding amusement by scaring themselves. "Tis the eye of childhood that fears a painted devil." In WITCHCRAFT Christensen shows us the most appalling and frightening sights but then undercuts them with sardonic or gross humor. Like his Satan in that film, he seems to be sticking his tongue out at us for our willingness to suspend our disbelief, even briefly, in goblins and demons, a belief that caused so much *real* harm and horror in the Middle Ages. Only a mind as juvenile as Jim Kirkham's could see the creatures of Satan's house as anything other than frauds.

Christensen, who began his career as an opera singer and actor in his native Denmark, earned great acclaim for such innovative films as SEALED ORDERS (1914) and BLIND JUSTICE (1915, a.k.a. NIGHT OF REVENGE) which he directed for his own film company, Dansk Biograf. He later went on to make the extraordinary WITCHCRAFT which he finished in 1922 for Svensk Filmindustri. Then he worked for UFA in Germany where he made three films, AMONG JEWS (1922), HIS MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURE (1923) and THE WOMAN WHO DID (1923). None of them created any particular stir but Christensen gave a powerful and poignant performance in fellow Dane Carl Dreyer's MICHAEL (1924), playing an aging artist hopelessly infatuated with his youthful

The Spider (Sheldon Lewis) threatens Eve (Thelma Todd) in SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN in 1929.

model (a very young Walter Slezak). The film also has an amusing bit by cameraman Karl Freund as an unctuous art dealer.

In 1925 Christensen moved to Hollywood and MGM. His first film, THE DEVIL'S CIRCUS with Norma Shearer, got good reviews but looks pretty unimpressive today. It spite of its promising title it's just a nondescript romantic triangle set in a circus and has a resolution so relentlessly moralistic that it could have been written by Sister Mary Ignatius. Little better was MOCKERY (1926), a routine melodrama about heroic nobles vs. dastardly revolutionaries in Czarist Russia, which contains one of Lon Chaney's least interesting performances. Since Christensen wrote as well as directed both films it's hard to cite their failure as another example of the Great European Artist compromised by Hollywood vulgarity. After THE HAWK'S NEST (1927) Christensen did some work on the troubled production of MYSTERIOUS ISLAND before leaving First National for MGM.

Perhaps First National regarded Christensen, because of his WITCHCRAFT reputation, as their answer to Universal's Paul Leni and put him to work on the trio of comedy thrillers. The denizens of THE HAUNTED HOUSE included a mad doctor, a beautiful sleepwalker and a wild eyed strong man with fainting spells. It turns out they are all actors hired by a rich man to teach his greedy heirs a lesson. The "NY Times" reviewer thought it was a "muddled affair even for its type" but praised Christensen's direction while thinking it "worthy of something at least a trifle more logical than the gyrations of the group in this shadow diversion". The "Times" did not review 7 FOOTPRINTS or the last of the three, THE HOUSE OF HORROR (1929) but "Variety" panned them both.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE (1928) was the first of three quickly made films by Benjamin Christensen.

Christensen returned to Denmark in 1934 and subsequently made four more films, all of them domestic dramas, but they failed to capture any serious attention. The man of whom Carl Dreyer had said in 1920, "He made a pact with the future" spent the rest of his life managing a movie theater.

And is there a future for a serious version of "7 Footprints to Satan"? In these politically correct times Fu Manchu has been relegated to the scrap heap of movie villains (unless he gets resurrected as a hero) but Merritt's Satan would be a worthy successor. Then again, if Hollywood rediscovers him it'd probably be as a foil for Austin Powers, a fate that would have made even A. Merritt grateful for Creighton Hale.

- Henry Nicolella

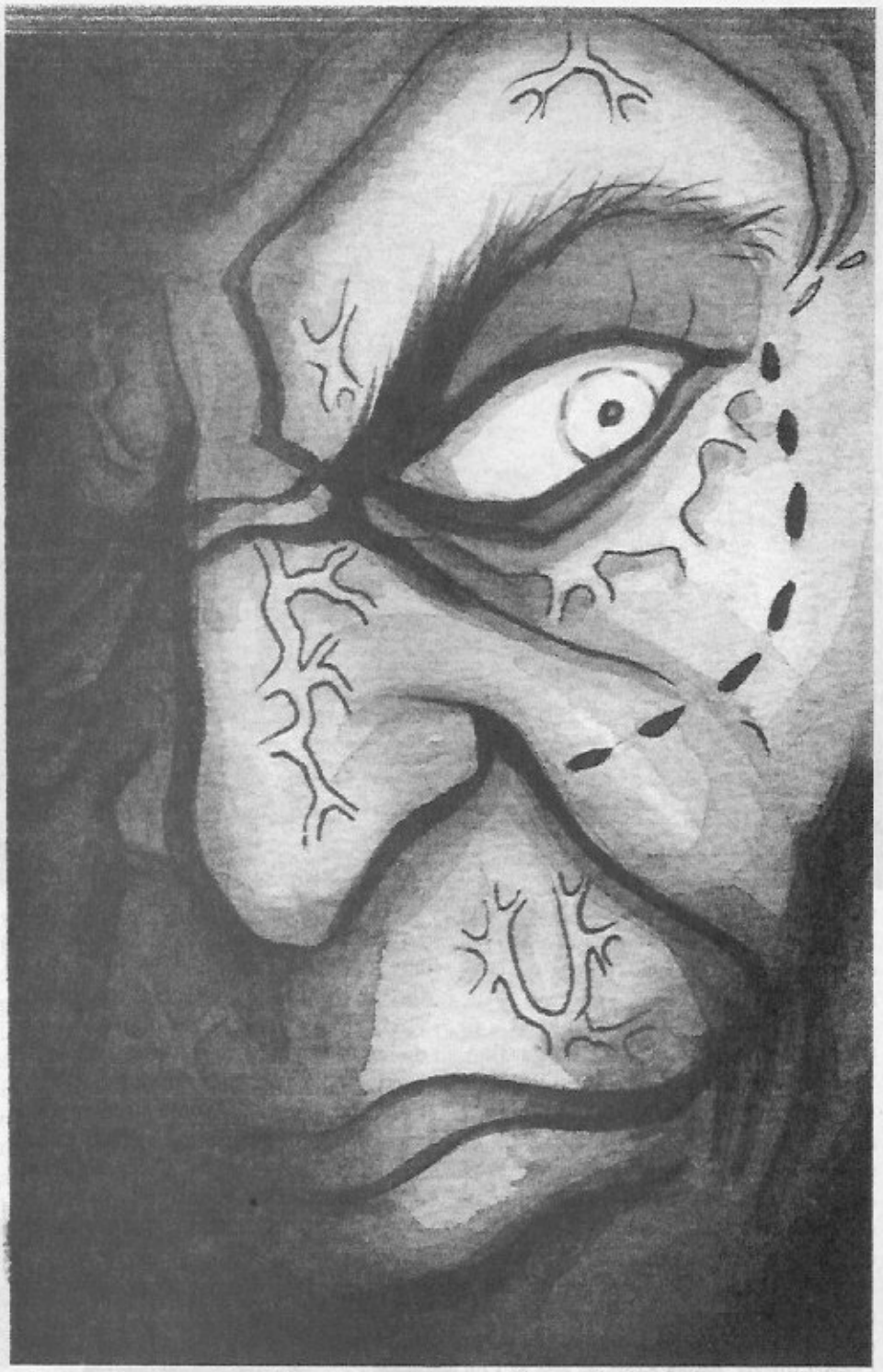
THE RETURN of THE MONSTER

Chapter 3

Story by John Skerchock

Art by Scott Pensak

(THE STORY SO FAR: The monster created by Baron Frankenstein has returned after a self-imposed isolation in the frozen wastelands of the north. He has made contact with a reporter to tell him his plans to no longer be like man but to be mankind's ruler. The monster, using the name Adam Oberman, has purchased a mountaintop mansion outside of a small half-forgotten town whose inhabitants are unknowingly serving the creature's goals.)



The man in the white lab coat is my friend. I feel good. I feel safe when he is near. He keeps me protected from harm. I am warm and safe. The man in the white lab coat is my friend. He'll never hurt me. I am safe. Warm. Tired.

Dreaming so peacefully of Amy. Soft and beautiful. The day is bright and cheerful like her smile. I am excited about our trip together. This is my first time out of the office in over a year. It feels good to get away. No longer restrained by deadlines and impatient clients. No worries. Just freedom.

We'll hike the Shade Ridge Trail from above Midway south to Blackwell. Thirty miles in four days ought to be easy, especially straight across the ridge. We'll meet up with Johnny, Karen, Curt, and Joanna for a two day canoe ride down the Blue Ball River. Then we'll ride back in Curt's van, pick up the Chevy, and home. No worries.

Amy smiles. She is sunshine. The rays make me feel warm. Love is wonderful. I feel good knowing that Amy loves the outdoors as much as I do. Maybe, when we retire, we'll move out to the woods. Build a cabin. Live with the animals...

I am shaken. I open my eyes to see the man in the white lab coat looking at me. He looks worried for a second then smiles. The smile warms me. He is my friend. He won't hurt me. I am safe with him.

Someone screams. Metal crashes against the floor.

The man in the white lab coat turns away.

I can see a table with a man on it. His chest is cut open and folded back. He is screaming. His arms are flailing about. Thin creatures hover over him like ghouls. They are carrying all sorts of sharp instruments. They are digging and picking and digging.

Suddenly the man's screaming stops. The man in the white lab coat shouts something to the ghouls then turns back to me.

I am shaking. I am scared, but his words comfort me. He speaks in soft assuring tones. I don't understand what he is saying, but his manner helps to calm me. I feel safe again.

I wonder who the man was on the table? I wonder why I am here and where I belong. I feel myself going back...

Amy and I drive to the quaint little town of Midway. We stop at an ice cream stand

at the end of town and get a Coke and sandwich. They didn't have a vegetarian menu so we settle for grilled cheese sandwiches. Amy laughs and my heart warms. It's easy to see why I fell in love with her. Sometimes I can't understand why she stays. Work has created a lot of pressure lately. But I feel top of the world today.

A man comes to the stand. He has curly, dark hair. He is thin and wears wire-rimmed glasses. He gets an ice cream cone. Someone calls him "Nutsy" and he laughs. He sits at the other end of our picnic table.

I find myself staring at Amy's beautiful eyes when the man let's out a big "Wow!" He slides down the bench to where I'm sitting and shows me the front page of one of the infamous tabloids.

"Hey, mister, you see this?" he asks.

The headline is something about the return of the Frankenstein Monster. I laugh and tell him the story is not as believable as the ones about the Bat Boy.

Yet this man seems concerned. He is worried that this article may actually be true. He begins to ramble on about watching horror movies as a kid on Saturday nights and being frightened by this mindless creature wandering through the woods.

I thank him for his time and, with Amy in hand, leave. I want to enjoy my vacation yet something is unsettling in the man's behavior. I don't know why but I begin to feel uneasy...

I open my eyes to some noise. It's HIM. It's the man with the face. He is screaming at the man in the white lab coat. He is shaking the man and pointing at me. His gnarled finger looks round and sharp like an old tree limb.

Suddenly I feel cold. I shake inside. I feel my stomach tie up in knots. The man with the face is yelling louder.

The man in the white lab coat pulls aways and stands between the man with the face and me. The yelling continues and I can see the veins in the eyes of the man with the face. He looks like he is on fire. The man in the white lab coat has his hands out in front of him. He is trying to speak but his voice is trembling.

One of the ghouls interrupts. He grabs the arm of the man with the face, and the man turns. Words are exchanged by the two. The man with the face suddenly turns and storms off.

The man in the white lab coats turns to

me, and smiles weakly. He is nervous. I feel scared. He tries to sooth me with words, but I still feel scared. I feel like...

Driving through Midway we see before us a quaint town. One convenience store, a restaurant, some shops, and a car dealership at the other end of town. A lot different from the city. It is quiet here. I want to stop and talk to the people and sit in the sun, but we'll do that later.

We turn off of the state route and go up to the mountain towards the state forest lands. We pass an old cemetery and bar. Further up we pass an elegant but run down mansion and, finally, we come to the state forest lands.

I park at the end of the lot near the trail entrance. It's almost three o'clock. Amy and I are excited about starting our trip. Yet something is bothering me inside. Something doesn't feel right. I ignore the feeling.

We unload the car. Years of hiking have taught us to travel lightly. We only carry our sleeping bags, a nylon tent, one change of clothes with extra socks and underwear, and the bulk of our weight is food. With all we are carrying our packs are still under twenty pounds, with Amy's being about ten pounds.

We set out on the Blackwell Trail. It is marked with red dots painted on trees about a hundred feet apart. It will be an easy hike. In a few days we meet up with our friends. I can't wait.

The forest is still. No birds singing. No squirrels running through the underbrush. Amy notices the smell first. I think someone is barbecuing chicken but can't see anyone else along our trail. The further south we walk the stronger the smell.

When we reach the edge of the mansion grounds the smell is at its strongest. I figure the owners are having some sort of party so Amy and I keep on the trail and put the mansion behind us.

By six o'clock we had hiked almost seven miles. We decide to set up camp and have a romantic evening. We will be up at break of day so tonight we'll be together and rest.

The moon is high in the sky when I suddenly hear the sound, or more the lack of sound. All the little creatures that come out under the cover of darkness to do their business, all the insect life that goes wild chirping and screeching in the darkness, falls silent. Nothing. No noise.

Amy sleeps peacefully. She has a smile on her lips.

I crawl out of the tent. My eyes are adjusted to the dark, and the moon gives me some light but I see nothing. I walk towards a stand of trees and stop. I listen but hear nothing unusual. Nothing at all. I turn and I am grabbed from behind.

Cold hands clutch me tight as something is put over my head.

I try to call Amy, to shout a warning, but I find myself falling asleep...

I see the man with the face staring at me. He scares me. The man in the white lab coat comes running to me. The man with the face pushes him back. He turns and words are exchanged.

The man with the face grabs the man in the white lab coat. He shakes the man in the white lab coat. They are still shouting at each other.

The man with the face picks up the man in the white lab coat and slams him down over the man with the face's right knee.

I hear a crack.

The man in the white lab coat falls to the ground.

I am scared. I am frightened...

Amy! Amy!...

I open my eyes. I am lying down. The man with the white lab coat isn't here. Ghouls hover over me. They have sharp instruments in their hands.

The man with the face looks down on me. He says something about my brain then leaves.

The ghouls touch me. They look like men but not men. No details on their faces like the man in the white lab coat. They look blank. They touch me with icy fingers. The poke and prod then the grab my head.

A ghoul comes close to my face. He breathes cold. He stinks. My stomach turns.

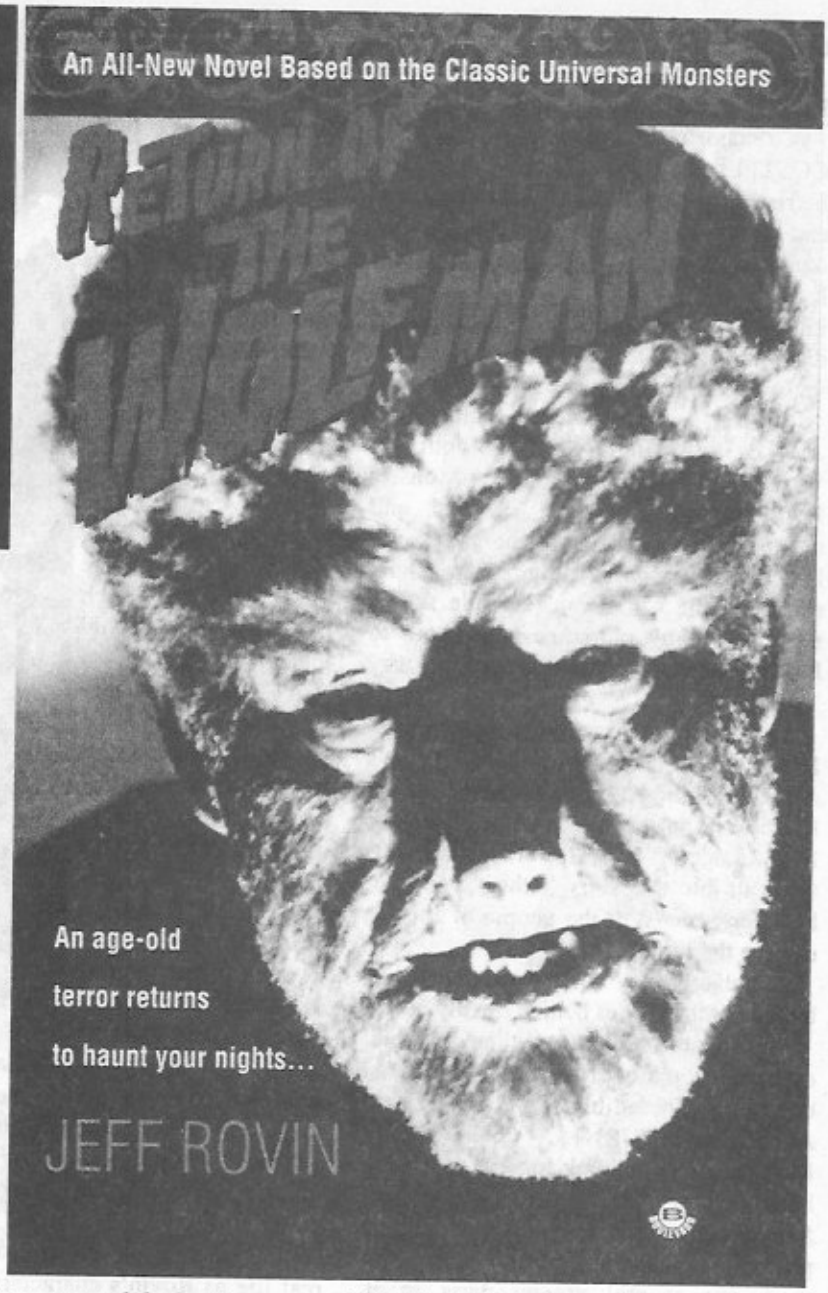
Where is the man in the white lab coat? He's my friend. He won't hurt me! I am safe when he is here. Where is he? Wait! Wait until he comes. He'll protect me.

They surround my head. A drill comes to me. I see it spinning madly. I try to scream but can't. The drill hits my head. Blood splatters the ghoul with the drill. My God it hurts! Help me. Please help me. Where's the man in the white...

FRANKENSTEIN

Book Reviews

RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN
by Jeff Rovin
Berkley Boulevard Books. October, 1998.
339 pages. $6.99.


An All-New Novel Based on the Classic Universal Monsters
RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN
An age-old
terror returns
to haunt your nights...
JEFF ROVIN

Reviewed by Joseph C. Romano

You have to love a book that begins where the movie ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN left off. After all, every book has to start somewhere and why not with the aftermath of a crazy Halloween night in 1948? That's exactly where ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN ended and the opening pages of RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN begin.

And what a night it was? Guest were returning from an elegant masquerade party on the Florida mainland to Castle Mornay, an eerie European citadel inspired by Henry Frankenstein's infamous work. The costume gala was fun for all those who were there, but it was anything other than a party inside the castle. The Wolf Man and Count Dracula struggled high atop the walls of the stone bastion, locked in a deadly embrace. The two foes plummeted into the murky night waters of the Atlantic as they viciously clung to each other and foolishly tried to end the other's existence. While the two rivals battled, Frankenstein's Monster was set ablaze by Professor Charles Stevens on the nearby boat dock after finding Dr. Sandra Mornay, the castle's owner, dead on her laboratory floor. As Chick Young and Wilbur Grey (Abbott and Costello) abandoned their rickety rowboat and swam to shore, Dracula's plans for the Monster were destroyed in bright red flames and the salty spray of the ocean.

Who could have guessed the best horror-comedy ever made would be spun off fifty years later into a modern story of Lawrence Talbot's resurrection and renewed life? As they say around the Gypsy campfires outside Llanwelly Village, "you can't keep a good werewolf down." And although I'm sure Jeff Rovin, the author of RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN, is no Gypsy, he certainly knows that old Gypsy rhyme:

"Even a man who's pure at heart
And says his prayers at night,
May become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms
And the autumn night is bright..."

Make no mistake about it either, this is definitely Jeff Rovin's tale to tell. Rovin seems like a man who has been scratched by wolfbane. He has both the credentials and knowledge to delve deep into the mystique behind all of our favorite monsters, especially the Wolf Man. Besides having experience as a comic book editor Rovin has written several fantasy related encyclopedias and the recent best-selling horror novel VESPERS about bats that attack New York City. In RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN Rovin uses the matinee monsters Universal Studios gave us over the years as the soul of his book and the heart of his tale. He has taken the celluloid myths that have been passed down to generations of movie audiences and woven a macabre tapestry rich in monster movie history and

film imagery.

In RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN Joan Raymond, an insurance investigator who was a major character in ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN, befriends Lawrence Talbot and helps him end his cursed existence. Shortly after her own death fifty years later, Joan Raymond's niece, Caroline Cooke, inherits Mornay Castle and moves into the dwelling, now known as the Tombs for reasons that soon become apparent.

Caroline, a disenchanted doctor from Atlanta, unwittingly awakens both the Wolf Man and Frankenstein's Monster from the sleep of the damned and unleashes their terror on the people of LaMirada, Florida. From a distant island retreat in the Caribbean, Dracula senses the return of his old nemesis and sails to LaMirada to claim his revenge on Larry Talbot.

The Wolf Man, Frankenstein's Monster, Dracula - all in the same book! If that's not enough for you, throw in hints of the Invisible Man and the Creature from the Black Lagoon! Well, Jeff Rovin rolls them all into this story, either directly or by inference. Will the people of Florida ever be the same?

It's unlikely they will - but only if they believe in the stories behind the myth.

Unfortunately, most of them do not, creating a major flaw in what is an otherwise incredibly fantastic book. Although RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN is a terrific book for fans of classic horror films, others without the proper Saturday afternoon glary-eyed upbringing probably will not like it as much. Yes, there are several creepy parts in it, especially the background development of the young Vlad Tepes, destined to become the immortal Count Dracula. The description of his new life as Master of the zombies of Marya Island provides a highly imaginative outcome for the dreaded Prince of the Undead. Despite its spooky pedigree, however, the book never quite captures the spirit of the movies that inspired it, nearly crumbling like the rotting corpse of a vampire with a stake in its heart.

Somehow the innocent spirit of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello tangling with the supernatural has been lost over the past five decades. Almost every normal character in this book, except Tom Stevenson, LaMirda's court-appointed public defender, doubts the extraordinary events that are happening around them. The monsters appear and the dead bodies pile up and still the normal folks tell us not to believe in the creatures of the night. "Someone's playing an elaborate hoax on the citizens of our town," they say over and over again. "There are no such things as werewolves, vampires, or man-made monsters," they claim, even when the existence of such monsters is the only logical explanation for the un-reality surrounding them.

Matt Willis, a state trooper investigating several mysterious disappearances at the Tombs, and Henry Pratt, a lawyer who is attracted to Caroline Cooke, are good examples of what I mean. Throughout the book they keep reminding us how wrong we are and how right they are. There's too much doubt in their hearts, too much skepticism in their words. If the people inhabiting this book don't believe in their own circumstances, how can we?

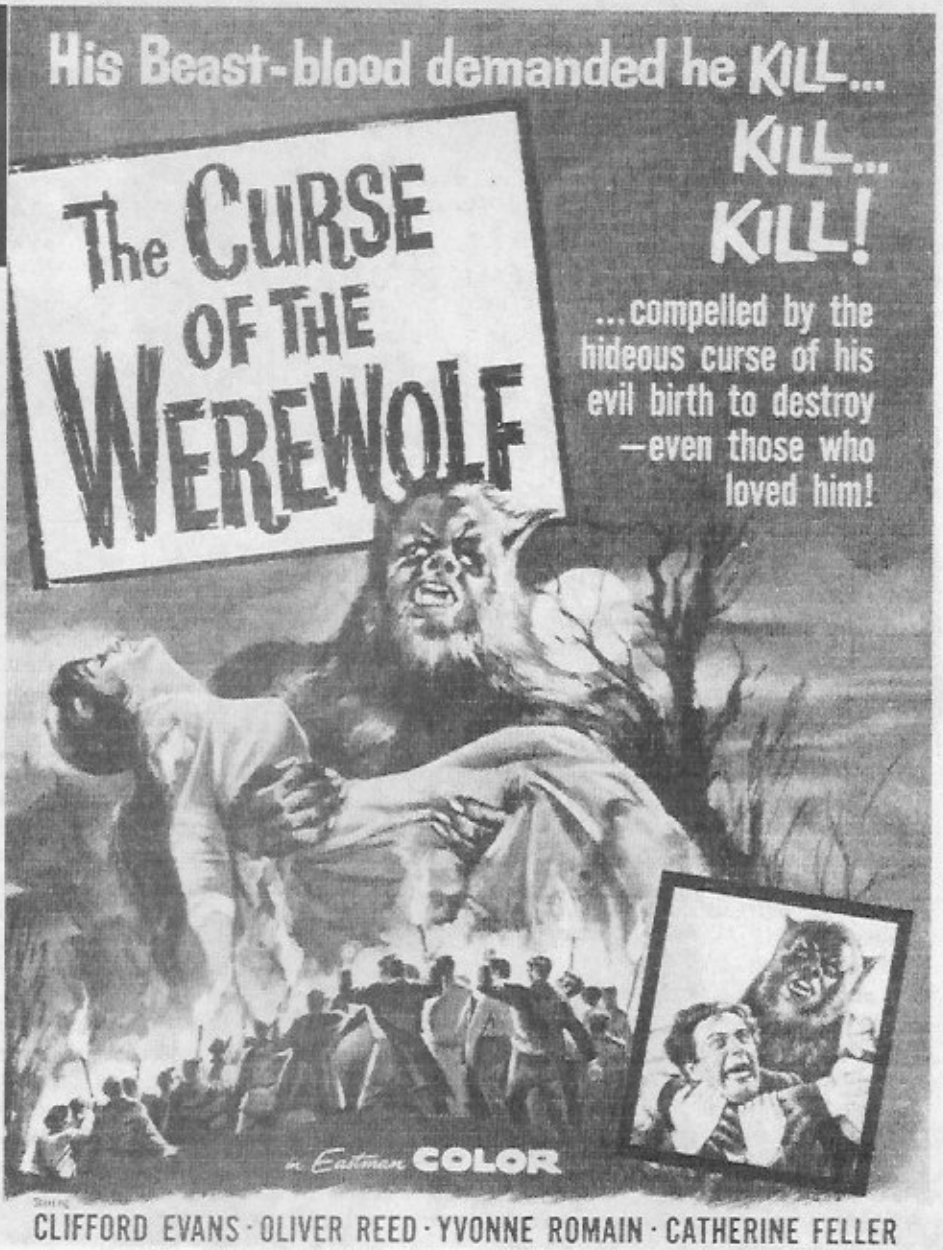
But I suppose we are just as flawed in real life as Rovin's characters are on the written page. Deep in our hearts, we know what they are saying is the truth. Maybe we have lost our innocent spirit, too. We're no longer afraid of "ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties and things that go bump in the night." At least not in broad daylight. Yet there is a difference between us and them. We want to believe in scary things and Rovin's characters do not.

Don't get me wrong, if you love CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN and THE JOURNAL OF FRANKENSTEIN and ever wondered what happened to the inhabitants of a favorite movies after the closing credits started rolling, you'll enjoy this book more than most people would. RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN is really the stuff of our dreams, weird though they may be, and we have to encourage more novels like this. (In fact, it's rumored that Jeff Rovin has a whole series of similar stories planned and I am eagerly awaiting the next one.) But a day or two after finishing RETURN OF THE WOLF MAN, you might wonder why you liked it so much. I think it's because we each love this gang of monsters in our own special way. We have known them for years and, in spite of what others may say, we still believe in them.

And we always will!

BEHIND THE HOWLS OF...

by Jeff Kurta


His Beast-blood demanded he KILL... KILL... KILL!
...compelled by the hideous curse of his evil birth to destroy —even those who loved him!
The CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF
in Eastman COLOR
CLIFFORD EVANS · OLIVER REED · YVONNE ROMAIN · CATHERINE FELLER
Screenplay by JOHN ELDER · Directed by TERENCE FISHER · Produced by ANTHONY HINDS · Executive Producer MICHAEL CARRERAS

THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF is an A-effort all the way. Hammer Films took many of the old tried and true Universal concepts, and advanced them, for a more mature audience. CURSE is in no way, kiddie fodder, although today, comes off as rather tame. All the "sudden impacts" are there however, just the same. The rape scene, shown inside the wired beggar's cell, could have never been brought off in quite the same manner, in any of the Larry Talbot wolf-adventures. When Hammer did it, they managed to get by, as it was rendered in quite good taste. Still the critics were not too overjoyed.

Shots of the very well endowed Yvonne Romain (as Leon's ravishing but totally mute mother), would have been taboo over at Universal, in the 1940's. The woman nearly spills out of her tattered dress, in some select scenes. But yet again, done in good taste. Some of the publicity stills and posters for this now classic monsterpiece, actually feature the fully transformed Leon (as played by Ollie Reed, of course!), ready to do in his own mother! Some of the foreign movie one-sheets, clearly display the CURSE werewolf carrying off the very limp body of Romain. None of the above however, were never contained in the finished product. Thank ghoulness for that!!! Still the vividly painted images, helped in a giant way, to sell the film to the monster-movie going public here and all across the globe in hundreds of respected cinemas everywhere.

THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, aka THE WOLFMAN (in some circles), was a low budget horror effort all the way, but joyfully, does not show ever a small hinting of such. The sets were very meticulously constructed...but one set in particular, which features a Spanish town exterior, had already been long done. Hammer had serious plans to lense a Spanish Inquisition film, but the idea never really got all that far off the ground...well, except for the marvelous exterior set, which had been especially put together for the occasion. The film project, to be called THE RAPE OF SABENA, was never filmed. CURSE ended up benefiting tremendously, adding the welcomed "abandoned" set, to its entourage!

Guy Endore's fabulously penned scare-novel THE WEREWOLF OF PARIS, was slightly revamped for Hammer's needs, and the end result was actually - - - THE WEREWOLF OF SPAIN! With Frankenstein, Dracula, Sherlock Holmes, The Mummy, Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, and et al behind him, it was time to resurrect yet another ghoulden oldie from the past...THE WEREWOLF!!! And just who is "him", you ask??? Why perhaps Hammer's best director of them all - - - Terence Fisher! His direction evidenced in THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, is entirely fluid, and nearly flawless (Sorry Terence old boy, but nobody is perfect!). Once we get past a rather slow moving first half, the rest of the picture moves at a rapid-fire click, hardly stopping to let the viewer capture his or her breath. Fisher always put his "stamp", on any and every film, he had ever toiled on. It was he, who brought back all the glorious horrors from Hollywood's ghoulden days, retooling them for modern filmgoers.

Not many years before, werewolves were invading drive-in theatres all across this

great nation. In the mid to late 1950's, teenage girls yanked their own hair out (almost like the young Elvis Presley made them do!), while their boyfriends let out loud gasps...the wolfmen of the G-I-A-N-T screen were on the prowl!!! There was THE WEREWOLF (1956), I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF ('57, with a very young pre-Bonanza Michael Landon), and even a "so-called" lycanthrope in HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER in 1958.

But when 1961 came around, and it was time for THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF to make its entrance, gone was all the candy-coated tomfoolery, all the fun fakiness, and low low budgets that for the most part, stuck out like numerous sore thumbs. CURSE would be very serious stuff! There is not a hint even, of camp in it. Hammer wound up having another very sure-fire winner with it! THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, made for Universal International, and released through Rank, made its glorified debut in May of '61. And to much criticism, as I have already touched on. The theatre patrons loved it however, and wanted more! And when you ponder it, it is rather odd that Hammer did not keep the werewolf concept going, as a regular horror series, like they ended up doing, with both Frankenstein and Dracula.

Actor Oliver Reed, would have been type-cast most assuredly though, even though he might have been more famous for it. Just think of Cushing and Lee, and what they are most noted for today (of course "Saint Peter" is no longer with us). A continuing werewolf movie series still, would have been highly ideal.

Producer Anthony Hinds, turned in another winning script, under his alter-ego of John Elder, which he had done often, throughout his dual careers. Bray Studios, must have been brimming with proudness. And there certainly was not stopping them there! During the opening credits of THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, we are treated to a close-up of the sinister eyes of Reed as the hairy creature of the night. An ingenious bit, to be sure, giving us a tiny taste of wicked things to come. As the credits roll, the monster's dripping orbs dart back and forth. Already totally frightening, and the movie has yet to really commence! The music of Benjamin Frankel, adds to the overall effect that the film has on us, and done in the James Bernard tradition. Still, it is largely the great direction by Terence Fisher; the terrific acting ensemble; and the utterly breathtaking were-makeups by Roy Ashton, that made this high-rated production all mesh together, in a perfect harmony. Ashton, who had become head of Hammer's make-up department in 1959, taking over for the departing Phil Leakey, surely had his skilled hands full, when it came to transforming Reed from human male, to male werewolf. Reed's young body was covered

with fur, right down to the actor's waist. How uncomfortable that must have been! Ashton turned in a very "dynamic performance" with his own bit of monster theatrics, and the result, was the most terrifying manwolf ever to grace any theatre screen!!! The viewer does not get a clear look at the CURSE were-beast until really near the end of the picture. But, it is well worth holding on for! Roy Ashton, who passed on in 1995 (and who's first name was actually Howard), had his first big scream assignment in 1936, during his pre-Hammer days. At that time, he helped make-up Boris Karloff for THE MAN WHO LIVED AGAIN. This pic is also known as THE MAN WHO CHANGED HIS MIND. Before taking his "head" position over at Hammer, Ashton assisted Phil Leakey on many projects. Ashton created the terrifying creatures seen in: THE MUMMY (1959); THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA ('62); the look of Lee in DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS ('65); and transformed actress Jacqueline Pearce, into THE REPTILE ('66), his last for the tiny studio across the ocean. He was also responsible for the horrible things seen in: THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, THE PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES. THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF was entirely his own artful rendering. When you view CURSE, please do think of the late master behind Reed's shocking "appearance"...the nod should go to Roy Ashton, the one-time opera tenor. Be on the lurkout for a dated, but very fine interview with the late craftsman, in a very fine back-issue of the original CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN. That would be ish #24, the next to the last edition. Look for the Karloff TOWER OF LONDON cover.

While THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF was a starring vehicle for Oliver Reed (in fact, his first starring role ever!), he was not the lead in the film. He is listed right after Clifford Evans, who received star billing. In CURSE, Evans is a pure delight to watch, as the very caring foster dad to the accursed Leon. His part in the film is truly memorable. The following year, Clifford Evans would appear as a sort of Van Helsing vampire fighter, in Hammer's KISS OF THE VAMPIRE (1962), in which he turned up as Professor Zimmer. He was THE COURAGEOUS MR. PENN, way back in 1941, all about the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania., William Penn himself! Evans is fine in the lead role, but the account itself, is a very boring black and white British effort. For Clifford Evans fans only!! Beware!!!

And now to the late actor, whom we have all regarded as the true star in THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, Oliver Reed. Reed, was born in London, England, on February 13, 1938. He will always be remembered as the werewolf, but had a long and rather varied motion picture career. The robust Reed, had a wide variety of odd jobs, prior to taking a

brand new position of actor. He was even a bouncer for a spell. Certainly the man, was not small in stature, and he did always seem to be quite full of spirit (and "spirits", as time wore on). He would find himself in many real life barroom brawls through his years, and was an accomplished ladies man. It was the bottle that took over the second portion of his life, and the evil that had finally done the actor in. He was only 22 years young, when hired for the role of Leon/THE WEREWOLF, a role that paid him 90 pounds per week during filming of CURSE. During his long-running and respectable acting life, Reed racked up an amazing number of films to his credit. Some 59 (recently reported as being about 53), which does not take into account his many diverse television appearances over the decades. Most of his features are now finally available via video too. Amazingly, his name more often than not, cannot be found in some of the most noteworthy almanacs, on these shores. How profound! He is totally believable in CURSE, and one can easily see his acting potential, even back then. Oliver Reed was destined for a fruitful life in the acting arts. Hammer films gave the man his start, and was often cast in bit roles. Such is the case with THE SWORD OF SHERWOOD FOREST ('60), and THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL ('60). In the latter, he turns up as a drunk. In 1962, one whole year after his furry stint in THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, Reed made three fantasy films for Hammer. Probably the best of the lot, is CAPTAIN CLEGG (known on these shores as NIGHT CREATURES), where he squares off against a very vile Peter Cushing. Reed is Harry the hero in this action-filled opus. The pic is a remake of 1937's DR. SYN, and also features CURSE's curvy Yvonne Romain, as his lover. She is far from being muted in this offering! He was the crazed killer in PARANOIAC, the first film for Freddie Francis, in a director's chair. And rounding out the terrible trio for 1962, Ollie Reed spewed forth nastiness as a motorcycle gang member in THE DAMNED, released to U.S. TV as THESE ARE THE DAMNED. The latter title of which we are more familiar with. The actor found himself in plenty of "A" pictures as well, such as THE THREE MUSKETEERS (1974), and its 1975 big screen sequel THE FOUR MUSKETEERS. Christopher Lee, also shared the limelight in both! These epics are wild and bawdy retellings of the Dumas legend, with plenty of camp and slapstick abounding. Reed is the main lead in both. During the latter part of his career, he turned up in two movie remakes of Edgar Allan Poe short stories, both totally embarrassing. The lackluster epics? THE HOUSE OF USHER ('88), and THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM ('91). While filming a wide screen production in Malta, Oliver Reed passed on. He left this void, on exactly May 2, 1999. He may be gone, but will never be forgotten. His biggest legacy may indeed be THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF.

The luscious servant girl, with beauty galore, but without audio output, was played by the already talked about Yvonne Romain. You cannot take your eyes off the girl, whenever she's on-screen. Sadly, she's not on enough! The woman at the time, could have very easily been a Gina Lollobrigida wannabe...almost a dead-ringer for the spicy lady who loved the Tony Quinn Quasimodo, of 1957! Romain

could have very easily portrayed the tempting gypsy girl Esmeralda, and with the very same finesse. Just prior to her signing for THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, Romain acted opposite horror films fave Anton Diffring, in the cult hit CIRCUS OF HORRORS (1960). In this creepified charmer, Diffring chops, hacks, and otherwise mugs his way through the gory proceedings, as a lunatic plastic surgeon, on the run. The goon is a skilled artiste with a scalpel, and has the talents to make the bad girls look pretty. Also in the cut-up cast, is the late Donald Pleasence, who would later gain much fame, as Dr. Loomis, of the HALLOWEEN flicks. This little epic, with three rings full of murders and utter mayhem, is on home video, and I very highly recommend it. And if you are indeed a Yvonne Romain fan, might I kindly suggest that you go for it! Besides the already hinted at CAPTAIN CLEGG, in which she falls for Oliver Reed, you may find Miss Romain in DEVIL DOLL (1963), which features a sort of "Chucky" wannabe...and it's no child's play! The beauty, can also be found in Elvis Presley musical movie vehicle DOUBLE TROUBLE, from 1967. Black and white still shots of Romain in the monsterfilm mags of the 60's and 70's, sure made my crimson cook! Raw talent, and a heaping scoop of sex appeal to top it all off. To my knowledge, because of her role in THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, she was Hammer's only "silent" scream-queen. May she reign on!

In another small role is the very familiar face of Anthony Dawson, who turns in one nasty performance, as the hideous Marques Siniestro, the dictator who has the mute girl tossed into the dark cell with the beggar-man, who is in reality, a real wolf-man. You may well recall having ogled him in the very first Bond feature film DR. NO (1962), but he was also in DIAL 'M' FOR MURDER ('54), the Hitchcock classic. Dawson was a seasoned film veteran, and even found himself in the company of THE HAUNTED STRANGLER in 1958. This little B&W production, starring the inimitable King Karloff, is also known as THE GRIP OF THE STRANGLER.

And speaking of THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF old beggar...who can forget him???! Especially after all his years of solitary confinement. The man literally became a walking "stalking" human furball! The poor chap is essayed by Richard Wordsworth. If you have seen THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT (1956), then you'll know first-hand, what happens to Wordsworth's character. As returning astronaut Victor Carroon, he slowly morphs into a hideous mess of monster, in Hammer's first horror treatment. The film, which stars Brian Donlevy, as Professor Quatermass (he would return for the 1957 sequel QUATERMASS 2) is also known by seasoned monster movie buffs as THE CREEPING UNKNOWN. Wordsworth, can be found in

the second Hammer Frankenstein offering of THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN ('58), with "Baron Cushing" again at the helm. In 1984, he appeared in the British science-fiction series TRIPODS, which was run here in the states on PBS, for a short time. I do believe the Sci-Fi Channel has also broadcast it.

John Gabriel was the priest. It seems the man was born to play this role. In 1964, he would find himself in SEX AND THE COLLEGE GIRL, which features Roger Corman favorite Luana Anders, and a very young Charles Grodin. Gabriel hung up his robes for the "swinging life"!!! From the priest in CURSE, Leon learns of another kind of love. The love of our precious lord. Gabriel manages to convey God's message nicely. One of the few true happy points, found in the 91 minute tale (the MCA/Universal video release of 1992, has a running time of some 93 minutes. As with al video cassettes of the pre-record variety, the film does not start immediately).

Dominique, the goat-herding gent, is played by the hulking George Woodbridge, another very familiar face to film fans. Some video journals and even a fantasy filmag or three, actually talk-about sheep-herders in THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, of which there is not a single of that sort! Only goats, and the men who tend them. Woodbridge, a Hammer veteran, can be seen in THE MUMMY (1959, as a police constable), THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN (as a handyman), and THE REPTILE.

THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF, is a very different wolfman tale in some respects, but at the same time, harks back to the old days of 1940's Universal. Gone however, are any hints of gypsies, pentagrams, wolfbane, silver bullets, and without the aid of a crucifix of more. Lon Chaney's forever tormented Larry Talbot, sought love as well, but in his case, it would have never offered him a cure. The grown Leon (Reed), finds himself nearly cured. Surely the love of his family and God, sent him on his way, but it was the love of a lovely young lady, that nearly yanked the devil out of him. If not for all the confusion and frustration, the poor fellow may have been totally exorcised of his evils. It nearly works, but in the end, the bad outweighs the good.

Catherine Feller, as the fetching Christina, makes for one of the prettiest senoritas ever! Her feminine charm, and her rich and full red lips (just like ripe roses), can make even the most savage-est of beasts kneel. The pouty-lipped Feller is a winner every viewing! The old soak is of course perennial Hammer character actor, Michael Ripper. There is no disguising that face, nor the voice. And to think that he ends up as bunkmate to a ferocious blood-seeking werewolf!!! Ripper has highlighted many a production, no matter how miniscule the part. Cameos were his mainstay. In a very bit role, look for actor Desmond Llewelyn, as a well-dressed doorman. Best known as weapons and special gadgets expert "Q", in the James Bond films, he does not even receive a screen credit in THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF! Ah, the actors' life. Teresas, as played by Hira Talfrey, is actually servant to the kind Alfredo.

In 1974, Tyburn Films (a Hammer-like clone), tried its best to bring its own version of CURSE to the forefront. The result- - -not too bad at that. This near-remake is entitled LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF, sometimes listed as PLAGUE OF THE WEREWOLVES. Peter Cushing stars (and shines, as usual!), with handsome David Rintoul, featured as the Reed-like wolfman. The were-makeups are very Ashton-like, and extremely convincing. There is plenty of gore in this tale, but does not mar or take away from the overall effect of the story. Sure Cushing is up to his elbows in fresh blood...but then again, that's really nothing new for him! Hammer's Freddie Francis directed this well-handled shocker, and Tyburn even made use of Anthony Hinds, once again scripting under the pseudonym of John Elder. LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF, has been available on video for many years now, and my copy, is by Interglobal Video. Depending on the print, and video label, the film is either rated "R", or PG-13. Although LEGEND is good, there is no surpassing CURSE, which is regarded by many, as the best werewolf film ever made. I am one of the true grue believers!!!

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